

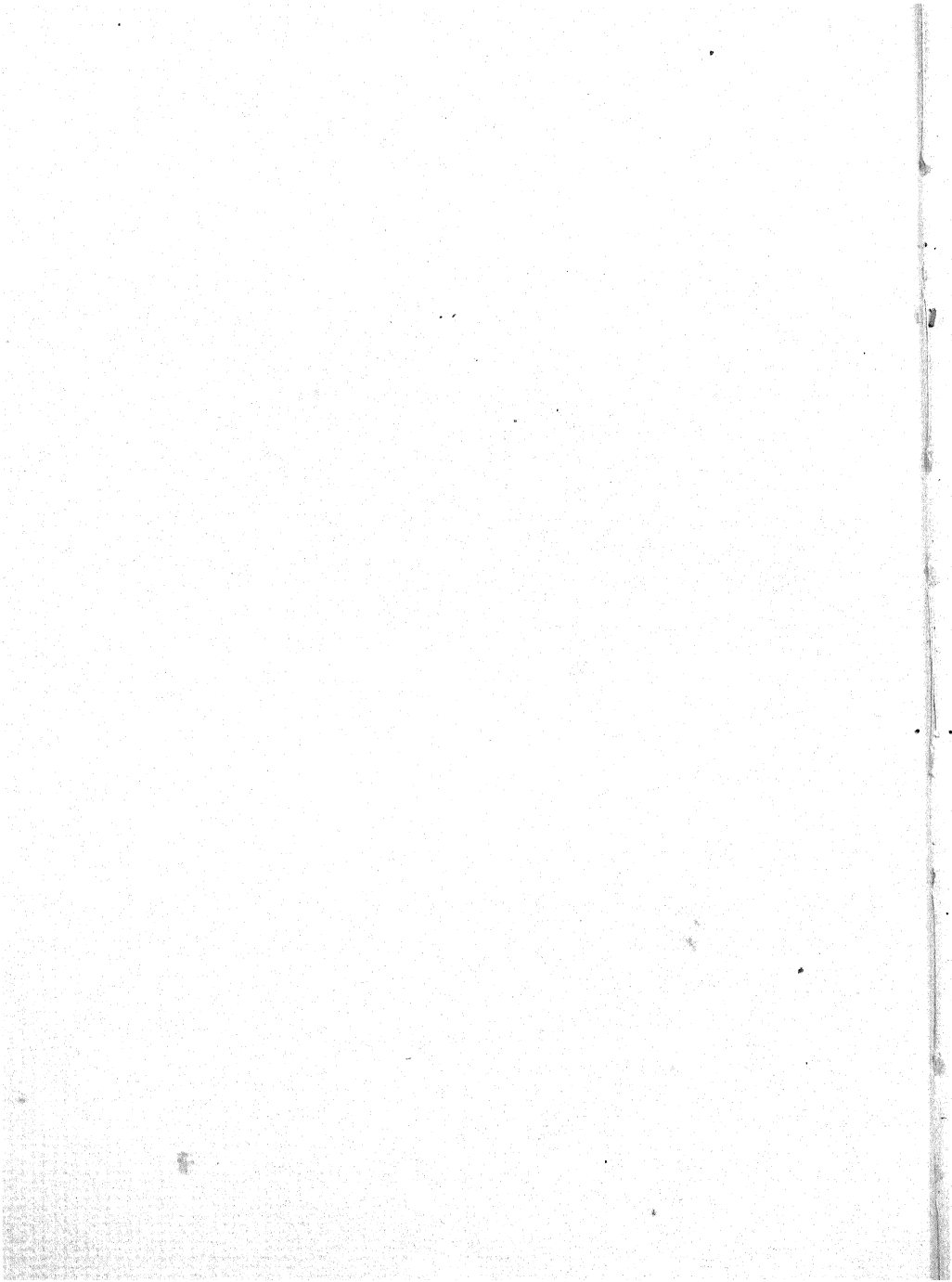
The Works of

Oliver Goldsmith

Library Edition



Harper and Brothers  
New York and London





Library Edition

THE WORKS OF  
OLIVER GOLDSMITH

EDITED BY  
PETER CUNNINGHAM, F.S.A.

*ILLUSTRATED*

VOL. III.



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
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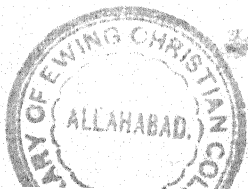
## ADVERTISEMENT.

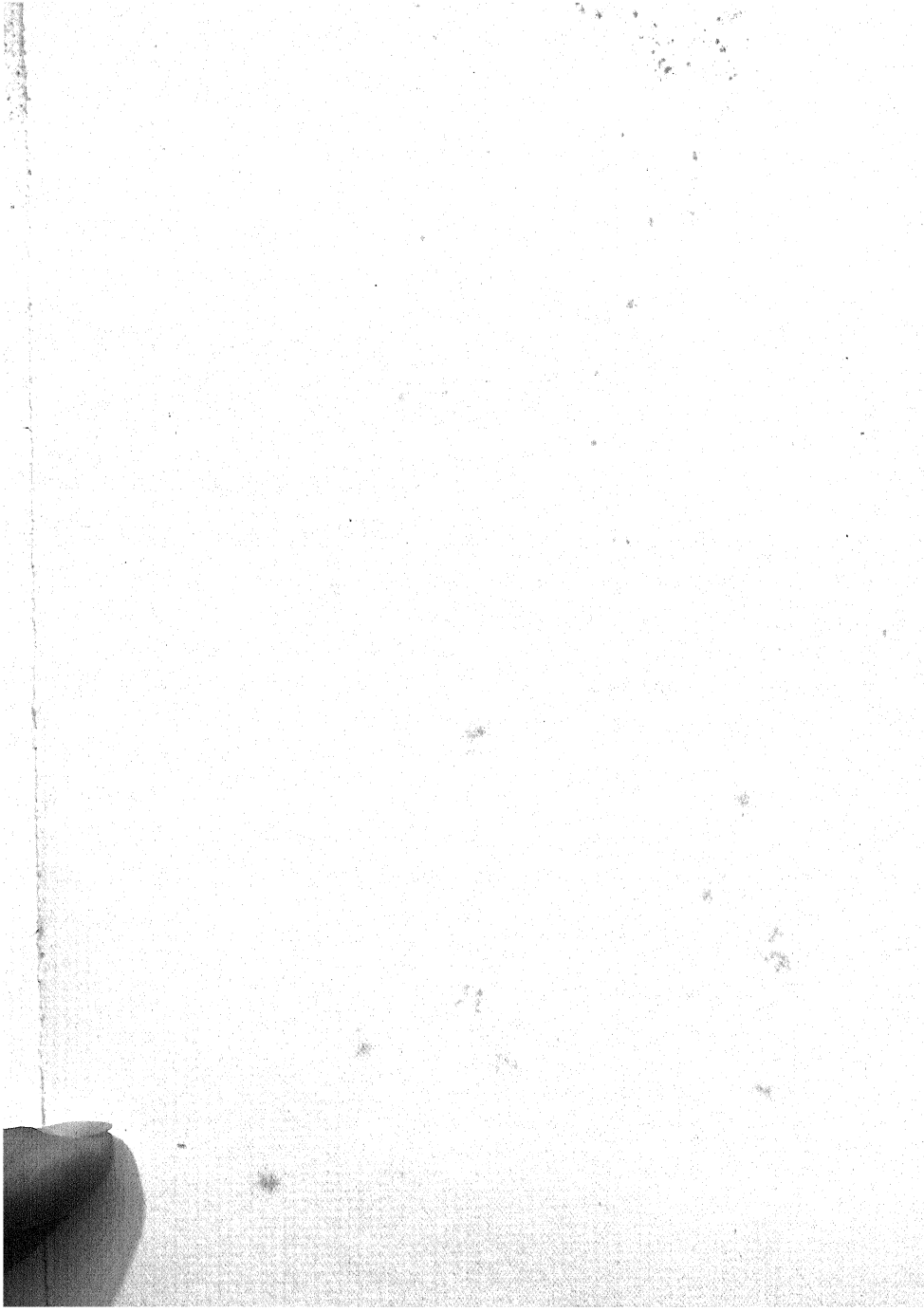
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THIS volume and the one following contain the "Inquiry into the State of Polite Literature in Europe," published in 1759, when Goldsmith was young and unknown; and the series of Letters, entitled "The Citizen of the World," written for the columns of a newspaper—afterwards collected by the author himself, and esteemed among the most delightful of his works.

In this volume, as in the preceding ones, I have been careful to mark all Goldsmith's own notes with his name—a duty which no other editor has deemed it worth while to perform. It is true that, in some instances, the author's notes have been retained by his editors, who have in such cases, however, invariably adopted them as their own, or have at least omitted all indication that they are his. Other notes, and those at times curiously illustrative of the text, have been most unaccountably omitted. I have restored all.

PETER CUNNINGHAM.



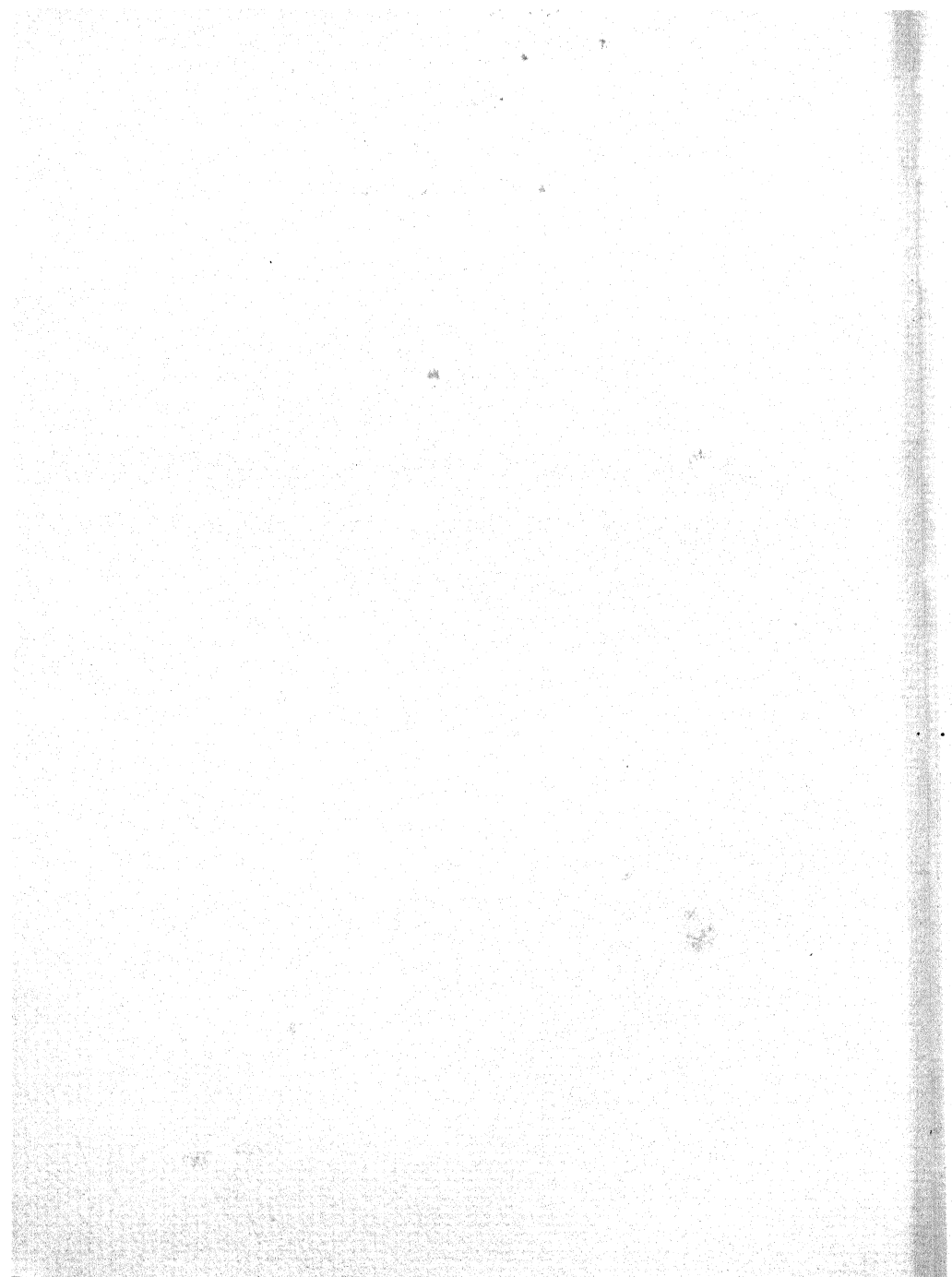


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AN INQUIRY  
INTO  
THE PRESENT STATE OF POLITE LEARNING  
IN EUROPE.

Εμοι προς φιλοσόφους εστι φίλια· προς μεν τοι σοφιστας η  
γραμματιστας ουτε νυν εστι φίλια μητε υστερον ποτε γενοιτο.

“Tolerabile si *Ædificia nostra* diruerent *Ædificandi* capaces.”

London:

Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pall Mall.

1759.

12°.

This Inquiry was first published in April, 1759, in a duodecimo volume of 200 pages, price 2s. 6d., sewed. "The second edition, revised and corrected," as the title-page sets forth, appeared in July, 1774, three months after Goldsmith's death. It was printed for J. Dodsley.

The text of this reprint is that of the second edition compared with the first. All the omitted passages, and many of the original readings of the amended paragraphs I have preserved in notes, for the purpose, chiefly, of showing what were Goldsmith's opinions in 1759, when young and unknown, contrasted with his maturer notions, when the world was more with him than it had been, fifteen years before.



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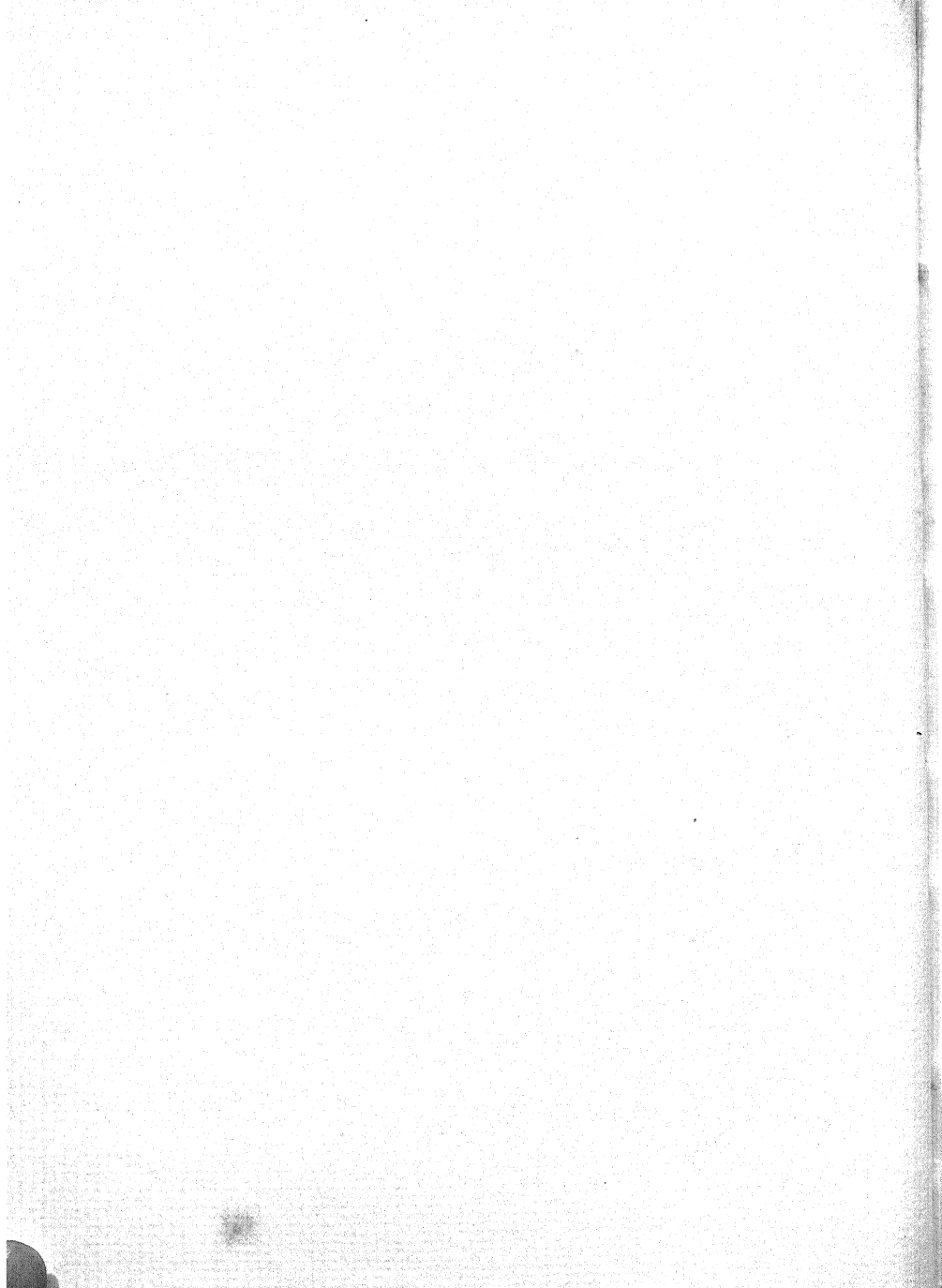
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<sup>1</sup> In the second edition (1774) erroneously described as Chapters VII. and VIII.

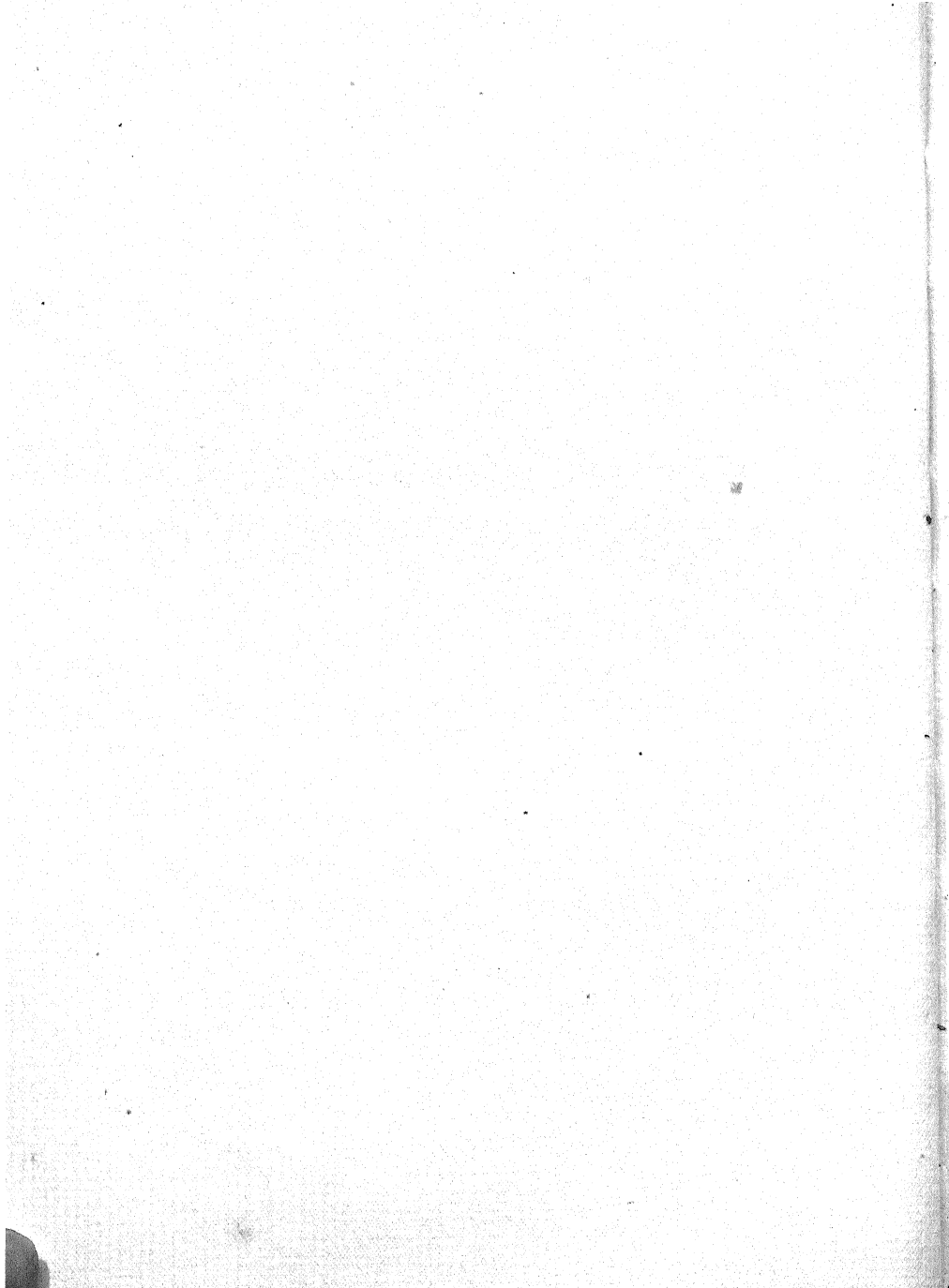
<sup>2</sup> Chapter VII. of the first edition (1759); omitted in the second (1774.)



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# AN INQUIRY INTO THE PRESENT STATE OF POLITE LEARNING IN EUROPE.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

It has been so long the practice to represent literature as declining, that every renewal of this complaint now comes with diminished influence. The public has been so often excited by a false alarm, that at present the nearer we approach the threatened period of decay, the more our security increases.

It will now probably be said that taking the decay of genius for granted, as I do, argues either resentment or partiality. The writer, possessed of fame, it may be asserted, is willing to enjoy it without a rival, by lessening every competitor; or, if unsuccessful, he is desirous to turn upon others the contempt which is levelled at himself; and being convicted at the bar of literary justice, hopes for pardon by accusing every brother of the same profession.

Sensible of this, I am at a loss where to find an apology for persisting to arraign the merit of the age; for joining in a cry which the judicious have long since left to be kept up by the vulgar; and for adopting the sentiments of the multitude, in a performance that at best can please only a few.

Complaints of our degeneracy in literature as well as in morals, I own, have been frequently exhibited of late; but

seem to be enforced more with the ardor of devious declamation than the calmness of deliberate inquiry. The dullest critic who strives at a reputation for delicacy, by showing he cannot be pleased may pathetically assure us that our taste is upon the decline; may consign every modern performance to oblivion, and bequeath nothing to posterity except the labors of our ancestors, or his own. Such general invective, however, conveys no instruction; all it teaches is, that the writer dislikes an age by which he is probably disregarded. The manner of being useful on the subject would be to point out the symptoms, to investigate the causes, and direct to the remedies of the approaching decay. This is a subject hitherto unattempted in criticism; perhaps it is the only subject in which criticism can be useful.<sup>1</sup>

How far the writer is equal to such an undertaking the reader must determine; yet perhaps<sup>2</sup> his observations may be just, though his manner of expressing them should only serve as an example of the errors he undertakes to reprove.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Here, in the first edition, occurs: "To mark out, therefore, the corruptions that have found way into the republic of letters, to attempt the rescuing of genius from the shackles of pedantry and criticism, to distinguish the decay naturally consequent on an age like ours, grown old in literature, from every erroneous innovation which admits a remedy, to take a view of those societies which profess the advancement of polite learning, and by a mutual opposition of their excellencies and defects, to attempt the improvement of each, is the design of this essay."

<sup>2</sup> Instead of "yet perhaps," the first edition has: "But this may be asserted, without the imputation of vanity, that he enters the lists with no disappointments to bias his judgment, nor will he ever reprove but with a desire to reform. The defects of his execution may be compensated by the usefulness of his design; and his," etc.

<sup>3</sup> Here, in the first edition, we read, commencing a new sentence: "If the present Inquiry were a topic of speculative curiosity, calculated to fill up a few vacant moments in literary indolence, I should think my labor ill-bestowed. To rank in the same despicable class with the dissertations, enigmas, problems, and other periodical compilations with which even idleness is dosed at present, is by no means my ambition. True learning and morality are closely connected; to improve the head will sensibly influence the heart; a deficiency of taste and a corruption of manners are sometimes found mutually to produce each other.

"Dissenting from received opinions may frequently render this essay liable to correction, yet the reader may be assured that a passion for singularity never gives rise to the error. Novelty is not permitted."

Novelty, however, is not permitted to usurp the place of reason; it may attend, but shall not conduct, the inquiry. But it should be observed that the more original any performance is, the more it is liable to deviate; for cautious stupidity is always in the right.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CAUSES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECLINE OF LEARNING.

IF we consider the revolutions which have happened in the commonwealth of letters, survey the rapid progress of learning in one period of antiquity, or its amazing decline in another, we shall be almost induced to accuse nature of partiality; as if she had exhausted all her efforts in adorning one age, while she left the succeeding entirely neglected. It is not to nature, however, but to ourselves alone that this partiality must be ascribed; the seeds of excellence are sown in every age, and it is wholly owing to a wrong direction in the passions or pursuits of mankind that they have not received the proper cultivation.<sup>2</sup>

As in the best regulated societies the very laws which at first give the government solidity may in the end contribute to its dissolution, so the efforts which might have promoted learning in its feeble commencement may, if continued, retard its progress. The paths of science, which were at first intricate because untrodden, may at last grow toilsome because too much frequented. As learning advances, the candidates for its honors become more numerous, and the ac-

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition adds: "In literature as in commerce, the value of the acquisition is generally proportioned to the hazard of the adventure. I shall think, therefore, with freedom, and bear correction with candor. It is but just that he who dissents from others should not be displeased if others differ from him. The applause of a few, a very few, will satisfy ambition; and even ill-nature must confess that I have been willing to advance the reputation of the age at the hazard of my own."

<sup>2</sup> Here the first edition adds: "It is not nature that is fatigued with producing her wonders, so much as we that are satiated with admiration."

quisition of fame more uncertain: the modest may despair of attaining it, and the opulent think it too precarious to pursue. Thus the task of supporting the honor of the times may at last devolve on indigence and effrontery, while learning must partake of the contempt of its professors.

To illustrate these assertions, it may be proper to take a slight review of the decline of ancient learning; to consider how far its depravation was owing to the impossibility of supporting continued perfection; in what respects it proceeded from voluntary corruption; and how far it was hastened on by accident. If modern learning be compared with ancient in these different lights, a parallel between both, which has hitherto produced only vain dispute, may contribute to amusement, perhaps to instruction. We shall thus be enabled to perceive what period of antiquity the present age most resembles; whether we are making advances towards excellence, or retiring again to primeval obscurity; we shall thus be taught to acquiesce in those defects which it is impossible to prevent; and reject all faulty innovations, though offered under the specious titles of improvement.<sup>1</sup>

Learning, when planted in any country, is transient and fading, nor does it flourish till slow gradations of improvement have naturalized it to the soil. It makes feeble advances, begins among the vulgar, and rises into reputation among the great. It cannot be established in a state at once, by introducing the learned of other countries; these may grace a court, but seldom enlighten a kingdom. Ptolemy Philadelphus, Constantine Porphyrogeneta, Alfred, or Charlemagne, might have invited learned foreigners into their do-

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<sup>1</sup> Here the first edition adds: "In early ages, when man was employed in acquiring necessary subsistence or in defending his acquisitions, when without laws or society he led a precarious life, while even the savage rivalled him in the dominion of the forest; in such times of fatigue and darkness we must not look for the origin of arts or learning, which are the offspring of security, opulence, and ease. When experience taught the advantages, when native freedom was exchanged for social security, when man began to feel the benefit of laws, and the mind had leisure for the contemplation of nature and itself, then, probably, the sciences might have been cultivated to add strength to the rising community, and the polite arts introduced to promote its enjoyment."



minions, but could not establish learning. While in the radiance of royal favor, every art and science seemed to flourish; but when that was withdrawn, they quickly felt the rigors of a strange climate, and, with exotic constitutions, perished by neglect.

As the arts and sciences are slow in coming to maturity, it is requisite, in order to their perfection, that the state should be permanent which gives them reception. There are numberless attempts without success, and experiments without conclusion, between the first rudiments of an art and its utmost perfection; between the outlines of a shadow and the picture of an Apelles. Leisure is required to go through the tedious interval, to join the experience of predecessors to our own, or enlarge our views, by building on the ruined attempts of former adventurers. All this may be performed in a society of long continuance; but if the kingdom be but of short duration, as was the case of Arabia, learning seems coeval, sympathizes with its political struggles, and is annihilated in its dissolution.

But permanence in a state is not alone sufficient; it is requisite also for this end that it should be free. Naturalists assure us that all animals are sagacious in proportion as they are removed from the tyranny of others. In native liberty, the elephant is a citizen, and the beaver an architect; but, whenever the tyrant man intrudes upon their community, their spirit is broken, they seem anxious only for safety, and their intellects suffer an equal diminution with their prosperity. The parallel will hold with regard to mankind; fear naturally represses invention; benevolence, ambition; for in a nation of slaves, as in the despotic governments of the East, to labor after fame is to be a candidate for danger.

To attain literary excellence also, it is requisite that the soil and climate should, as much as possible, conduce to happiness. The earth must supply man with the necessaries of life, before he has leisure or inclination to pursue more refined enjoyments. The climate, also, must be equally indulgent; for in too warm a region the mind is relaxed into languor, and by the opposite excess is chilled into torpid inactivity.

These are the principal advantages which tend to the improvement of learning,<sup>1</sup> and all these were united in the states of Greece and Rome.

We must now examine what hastens or prevents its decline.

Those who behold the phenomena of nature, and content themselves with the view without inquiring into their causes, are perhaps wiser than is generally imagined. In this manner our rude ancestors were acquainted with facts; and poetry, which helped the imagination and the memory, was thought the most proper vehicle for conveying their knowledge to posterity. It was the poet who harmonized the ungrateful accents of his native dialect; who lifted it above common conversation, and shaped its rude combinations into order. From him the orator formed a style; and though poetry first rose out of prose, in turn it gave birth to every prosaic excellence. Musical period, concise expression, and delicacy of sentiment were all excellencies derived from the poet; in short, he not only preceded, but formed the orator, philosopher, and historian.

When the observations of past ages were collected, Philosophy next began to examine their causes. She had numberless facts from which to draw proper inferences, and Poetry had taught her the strongest expression to enforce<sup>2</sup> them. Thus the Greek philosophers, for instance, exerted all their happy talents in the investigation of truth, and the production of beauty.<sup>3</sup> They saw that there was more excellence in captivating the judgment than in raising a momentary astonishment: in their arts, they imitated only such parts of nature as might please in the representation; in the sciences, they cultivated such parts of knowledge as it was every man's

<sup>1</sup> After "learning," the first edition reads: "Encouragement from the great is useful in preventing its decline." And the next paragraph commences: "Those who behold," etc.

<sup>2</sup> "The Greeks (for we know little of the Egyptian learning) now exerted," etc. —*First Edition.*

<sup>3</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Before this, the works of art were remarkable only for their vastness of design, and seemed the productions of giants, not of ordinary men; learning was another name for magic, or, to give it its real appellation, imposture. But these improvers saw that," etc.

duty to know.<sup>1</sup> Thus learning was encouraged, protected, honored, and in its turn it adorned, strengthened, and harmonized the community.<sup>2</sup>

But as the mind is vigorous and active, and experiment<sup>3</sup> is dilatory and painful,<sup>4</sup> the spirit of philosophy being excited, the reasoner, when destitute of experiment, had recourse to theory, and gave up what was useful for refinement.

Critics, sophists, grammarians, rhetoricians, and commentators now began to figure in the literary commonwealth. In the dawn of science, such are generally modest, and not entirely useless; their performances serve to mark the progress of learning, though they seldom contribute to its improvement. But as nothing but speculation was required in making proficient in their respective departments, so neither the satire nor the contempt of the wise, though Socrates was of the number, nor the laws levelled at them by the state, though Cato was in the legislature, could prevent their approaches. Possessed of all the advantages of unfeeling dullness, laborious, insensible, and persevering, they still proceeded mending, and mending every work of genius, or, to speak without irony, undermining all that was polite and useful. Libraries were loaded but not enriched with their labors,

<sup>1</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Unity, variety, and proportion charmed in all their design; liberty, patriotism, and a subjection to the laws were what all their true philosophers strove to inculcate. Thus learning," etc.

<sup>2</sup> Here the first edition adds: "From being the disciple of Greece, Rome soon became its rival, and was as much esteemed for its improvements in the arts of peace, as feared for its achievements in those of war. The Romans understood, perhaps better than their masters, the manner of blending art and science for their mutual improvement. By this means their philosophy acquired more grace, and their poetry more sentiment. They entirely banished that magical obscurity which the Greeks first borrowed from other nations, and some part of which their most admired writers thought proper still to retain. The learning of the Romans might justly be styled the truest refinement on common-sense; it was, therefore, a proper instrument in the hands of ambition. Their most powerful men not only encouraged, but became themselves the finest models of literary perfection. Thus the arts and sciences went on together, and reasoning proceeded no farther than where experiment pointed out the way."

<sup>3</sup> "But as the operations of body are slow, those of the mind vigorous and active, as experiment," etc.—*First Edition*.

<sup>4</sup> The first edition adds: "Speculation, quick and amusing."

while the fatigues of reading their explanatory comments was tenfold that which might suffice for understanding the original, and their works effectually increased our application, by professing to remove it.

Against so obstinate and irrefragable an enemy, what could avail the unsupported sallies of genius, or the opposition of transitory resentment? In short, they conquered by persevering, claimed the right of dictating upon every work of taste, sentiment, or genius, and at last, when destitute of other employment, like the supernumerary domestics of the great, made work for each other.

They now took upon them to teach poetry to those who wanted genius; and the power of disputing to those who knew nothing of the subject in debate. It was observed how some of the most admired poets had copied nature. From these they collected dry rules, dignified with long names, and such were obtruded upon the public for their improvement. Common-sense would be apt to suggest that the art might be studied to more advantage, rather by imitation than precept. It might suggest that those rules were collected, not from nature, but a copy of nature, and would consequently give us still fainter resemblances of original beauty. It might still suggest that explained wit makes but a feeble impression; that the observations of others are soon forgotten, those made by ourselves are permanent and useful. But, it seems, understandings of every size were to be mechanically instructed in poetry. If the reader was too dull to relish the beauties of Virgil, the comment of Servius was ready to brighten his imagination; if Terence could not raise him to a smile, Evantius was at hand, with a long-winded scholium to increase his titillation. Such rules are calculated to make blockheads talk; but all the lemmata of the Lyceum are unable to give him feeling.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Their logical disputations seemed even to be the apotheosis of folly. In these the opponent had a right to affirm whatever absurdity he thought proper. The defendant, though he saw the falsehood almost by intuition, was not allowed to use his reason, but his art, in the debate. It was his business only to measure the assertion by one of his artificial instruments, and as

But it would be endless to recount all the absurdities<sup>1</sup> which were hatched in the schools of those specious idlers; be it sufficient to say, that they increased as learning improved, but swarmed on its decline. It was then that every work of taste was buried in long comments; every useful subject in morals was distinguished away into casuistry, and doubt and subtlety characterized the learning of the age. Metrodorus, Valerius Probus, Aulus Gellius, Pedianus, Boethius, and a hundred others, to be acquainted with whom might show much reading and but little judgment; these, I say, made choice each of an author, and delivered all their load of learning on his back. Shame to our ancestors! many of their works have reached our times entire, while Tacitus himself has suffered mutilation.

In a word, the commonwealth of literature was at last wholly overrun by these studious triflers. Men of real genius were lost in the multitude, or, as in a world of fools it were folly to aim at being an only exception, obliged to conform to every prevailing absurdity of the times. Original productions seldom appeared, and learning, as if grown superannuated, bestowed all its panegyric upon the vigor of its youth, and turned encomiast upon its former achievements.

It is to these, then, that the depravation of ancient polite learning is principally to be ascribed. By them it was separated from common-sense, and made the proper employment of speculative idlers. Men bred up among books, and seeing nature only by reflection, could do little except hunt after perplexity and confusion. The public, therefore, with reason rejected learning, when thus rendered barren though voluminous; for we may be assured that the generality of mankind never lose a passion for letters while they continue to be either amusing or useful.

It was such writers as these that rendered learning unfit for uniting and strengthening civil society, or for promoting the

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it happened to accord or disagree, he found himself qualified to support, or obliged to discontinue, his defence; which seldom, however, happened till fatigue or anger terminated the inquiry."

<sup>1</sup> "Insect-like absurdities."—*First Edition.*

views of ambition. True philosophy had kept the Grecian states cemented into one effective body more than any law for that purpose; and the Etrurian philosophy, which prevailed in the first ages of Rome, inspired those patriot virtues which paved the way to universal empire. But by the labors of commentators, when philosophy became abstruse or triflingly minute, when doubt was presented instead of knowledge, when the orator was taught to charm the multitude with the music of his periods, and pronounced a declamation that might be sung as well as spoken, and often upon subjects wholly fictitious; in such circumstances learning was entirely unsuited to all the purposes of government or the designs of the ambitious. As long as the sciences could influence the state, and its politics were strengthened by them, so long did the community give them countenance and protection. But the wiser part of mankind would not be imposed upon by unintelligible jargon, nor, like the knight in *Pantagruel*, swallow a chimera for a breakfast, though even cooked by Aristotle. As the philosopher grew useless in the state, he also became contemptible. In the times of Lucian he was chiefly remarkable for his avarice, his impudence, and his beard.

Under the auspicious influence of genius, arts and sciences grew up together, and mutually illustrated each other. But when once pedants became law-givers, the sciences began to want grace and the polite arts solidity; these grew crabbed and sour, those meretricious and gaudy; the philosopher became disgustingly precise, and the poet, ever straining after grace, caught only finery.

These men also contributed to obstruct the progress of wisdom by addicting their readers to one particular sect or some favorite science. They generally carried on a petty traffic in some little creek; within that they busily plied about and drove an insignificant trade; but never ventured out into the great ocean of knowledge, nor went beyond the bounds that chance, conceit, or laziness had first prescribed their inquiries. Their disciples, instead of aiming at being originals themselves, became imitators of that merit alone which was constantly proposed for their admiration. In exercises of this

kind, the most stupid are generally most successful; for there is not in nature a more imitative animal than a dunce.

Hence ancient learning may be distinguished into three periods—its commencement, or the age of poets; its maturity, or the age of philosophers; and its decline, or the age of critics. In the poetical age commentators were very few, but might have in some respects been useful. In its philosophical, their assistance must necessarily become obnoxious, yet, as if the nearer we approached perfection the more we stood in need of their directions, in this period they began to grow numerous. But when polite learning was no more, then it was those literary law-givers made the most formidable appearance. “Corruptissima republica, plurimæ leges.”

But let us take a more distinct view of those ages of ignorance in which false refinement had involved mankind, and see how far they resemble our own.<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER III.

#### A VIEW OF THE OBSCURE AGES.

WHATEVER the skill of any country may be in the sciences, it is from its excellence in polite learning alone that it must expect a character from posterity. The poet and the historian are they who diffuse a lustre upon the age; and the philosopher scarcely acquires any applause, unless his character be introduced to the vulgar by their mediation.

The obscure ages, which succeeded the decline of the Roman Empire, are a striking instance of the truth of this assertion. Whatever period of those ill-fated times we happen to turn to, we shall perceive more skill in the sciences among the professors of them, more abstruse and deeper inquiry into every philosophical subject, and a greater show of subtlety and close reasoning, than in the most enlightened ages of all antiquity. But their writings were mere speculative amuse-

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<sup>1</sup> This concluding paragraph is not in the first edition.

ments and all their researches exhausted upon trifles. Unskilled in the arts of adorning their knowledge, or adapting it to common-sense, their voluminous productions rest peacefully in our libraries, or at best are inquired after from motives of curiosity, not by the scholar, but the virtuoso.

I am not insensible that several late French historians have exhibited the obscure ages in a very different light. They have represented them as utterly ignorant both of arts and sciences, buried in the profoundest darkness, or only illuminated with a feeble gleam, which, like an expiring taper, rose and sunk by intervals. Such assertions, however, though they serve to help out the declaimer, should be cautiously admitted by the historian. For instance, the tenth century is particularly distinguished by posterity with the appellation of obscure. Yet even in this, the reader's memory may possibly suggest the names of some whose works, still preserved, discover a most extensive erudition, though rendered almost useless by affectation and obscurity. A few of their names and writings may be mentioned, which will serve at once to confirm what I assert, and give the reader an idea of what kind of learning an age declining into obscurity chiefly chooses to cultivate.

About the tenth century flourished Leo the philosopher. We have seven volumes folio of his collections of laws, published at Paris, 1647. He wrote upon the art military, and understood also astronomy and judicial astrology. He was seven times more voluminous than Plato.

Solomon the German wrote a most elegant dictionary of the Latin tongue, still preserved in the university of Louvain; Pantaleon, in the lives of his illustrious countrymen, speaks of it in the warmest strains of rapture. Dictionary writing was at that time much in fashion.

Constantine Porphyrogeneta was a man universally skilled in the sciences. His tracts on the administration of an empire, on tactics, and on laws, were published, some years since, at Leyden. His court, for he was Emperor of the East, was resorted to by the learned from all parts of the world.

Luitprandus was a most voluminous historian, and particu-



larly famous for the history of his own times.<sup>1</sup> The compliments paid him as a writer are said to exceed even his own voluminous productions. I cannot pass over one of a latter date made him by a German: "Luitprandus nunquam Luitprando dissimilis."<sup>2</sup>

Alfric composed several grammars and dictionaries, still preserved among the curious.

Pope Sylvester the Eleventh wrote a treatise on the sphere, on arithmetic and geometry, published some years since at Paris.

Michael Psellus lived in this age, whose books in the sciences, I will not scruple to assert, contain more learning than those of any one of the earlier ages; his erudition was indeed amazing, and he was as voluminous as he was learned. The character given him by Allatius has, perhaps, more truth in it than will be granted by those who have seen none of his productions. "There was," says he, "no science with which he was unacquainted, none which he did not write something upon, and none which he did not leave better than he found it." To mention his works would be endless. His commentaries on Aristotle alone amount to three folios.

Bertholdus Teutonicus, a very voluminous historian, was a politician, and wrote against the government under which he lived; but most of his writings, though not all, are lost.

Constantinus Afer was a philosopher and physician. We have remaining but two volumes folio of his philological performances. However, the historian, who prefixes the life of the author to his works, says that he wrote many more, as he kept on writing during the course of a long life.<sup>3</sup>

Lambertus published a universal history about this time, which has been printed at Frankfort, in folio. A universal history in one folio! If he had consulted with his book-

<sup>1</sup> "In this he shows himself a perfect *matter-of-fact man*; but, like some moderns, who only value themselves on the same qualification, he was a most notorious fabulist.—*First Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> "In English, 'None but himself can be his parallel.'"—*First Edition*.

<sup>3</sup> "And when he had thus compiled more than any man that ever went before him, he fell asleep: *In domino obdormivit*."—*First Edition*.

seller, he would have spun it out to ten at least; but Lamber-tus might have had too much modesty.<sup>1</sup>

By this time the reader perceives the spirit of learning which at that time prevailed. The ignorance of the age was not owing to a dislike of knowledge; but a false standard of taste was erected, and a wrong direction given to philosophical inquiry. It was the fashion of the day to write dictionaries, commentaries, and compilations,<sup>2</sup> and to evaporate in a folio the spirit that could scarcely have sufficed for an epigram. The most barbarous times had men of learning, if commentators, compilers, polemic divines, and intricate metaphysicians deserved the title.

I have mentioned but a very inconsiderable number of the writers in this age of obscurity. The multiplicity of their publications will at least equal those of any similar period of the most polite antiquity. As, therefore, the writers of those times are almost entirely forgotten, we may infer that the number of publications alone will never secure any age whatsoever from oblivion. Nor can printing, contrary to what M. Beaumelle has remarked, prevent literary decline for the future, since it only increases the number of books, without advancing their intrinsic merit.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first edition adds: "Olympiodorus published commentaries upon Plato. Doctor Foster, in his late edition of the select dialogues of that philosopher, has often taken occasion to quote him, and mentions him with honor."

<sup>2</sup> Instead of "to write dictionaries, commentaries, and compilations," the first edition reads, "to consult books, not nature."

<sup>3</sup> Here followed, in the first edition:

#### "CHAPTER IV.

##### "A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE RISE AND DECLINE OF ANCIENT AND MODERN LEARNING.

"Few subjects have been more frequently and warmly debated than the comparative superiority of the ancients and moderns. It is unaccountable how a dispute so trifling could be contested with so much virulence. A dispute of this nature could have no other consequences, if decided, but to teach young writers to despise the one side or the other. A dispute, therefore, which, if determined, might tend rather to prejudice our taste than improve it, should have been argued with good-nature, as it could not with success. For mere critics to be guilty of such scholastic rage, is not uncommon, but for men of the first rank of fame to be delinquent also, is, I own, surprising.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OF THE PRESENT STATE OF POLITE LEARNING IN ITALY.

FROM ancient we are now come to modern times, and in running over Europe, we shall find that, wherever learning has been cultivated, it has flourished by the same advantages as in Greece and Rome; and that, wherever it has declined, it sinks by the same causes of decay.<sup>1</sup>

Dante, who wrote in the thirteenth century, was the first who attempted to bring learning from the cloister into the community, and paint human nature in a language adapted to modern manners. He addressed a barbarous people in a method suited to their apprehensions; united purgatory and the river Styx, St. Peter and Virgil, heaven and hell together, and shows a strange mixture of good-sense and absurdity.

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"The reflecting reader need scarcely be informed that this contested excellence can be decided in favor of neither. They have both copied from different originals, described the manners of different ages; have exhibited nature as they found her, and both are excellent in separate imitations. Homer describes his gods as his countrymen believed them. Virgil, in a more enlightened age, describes his with a greater degree of respect; and Milton still rises infinitely above either. The machinery of Homer is best adapted to an unenlightened idolater; that of the Roman poet to a more refined heathen; and that of Milton to a reader illuminated by revelation. Had Homer wrote like Milton, his countrymen would have despised him; had Milton adopted the theology of the ancient bard, he had been truly ridiculous. Again, should I depreciate Plautus for not enlivening his pieces with the characters of a coquet, or a marquis, so humorous in modern comedy? or Molière, for not introducing a legal bawd, or a parasitical boaster, so highly finished in the Roman poet? My censure, in either case, would be as absurd as his who should dislike a geographer for not introducing more rivers or promontories into a country than nature had given it; or the natural historian for not enlivening his description of a dead landscape with a torrent, a cataract, or a volcano.

"The parallel between antiquity and ourselves can, therefore, be managed to advantage only by comparing the rise and progress of ancient and modern learning together, so that, being apprised of the causes of corruption in one, we may be upon our guard against any similar depravations in the other."

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is not in the first edition.

The truth is, he owes most of his reputation to the obscurity of the times in which he lived. As in the land of Benin a man may pass for a prodigy of parts who can read, so in an age of barbarity a small degree of excellence insures success. But it was great merit in him<sup>1</sup> to have lifted up the standard of nature, in spite of all the opposition and the persecution he received from contemporary criticism. To this standard every succeeding genius resorted; the germ of every art and science began to unfold; and to imitate nature was found to be the surest way of imitating antiquity. In a century or two after, modern Italy might justly boast of rivalling ancient Rome; equal in some branches of polite learning, and not far surpassed in others.

They soon, however, fell from emulating the wonders of antiquity into simple admiration. As if the word had been given when Vida and Tasso wrote on the arts of poetry, the whole swarm of critics was up. The Speronis of the age attempted to be awkwardly merry; and the Virtuosi and the Nascotti sat upon the merits of every contemporary performance. After the age of Clement VII. the Italians seemed to think that there was more merit in praising or censuring well than in writing well; almost every subsequent performance being designed rather to show the excellence of the critic's taste than his genius.<sup>2</sup> One or two poets, indeed, seem at present born to redeem the honor of their country. Metastasio has restored nature in all her simplicity,<sup>3</sup> and Maffei is the first that has introduced a tragedy among his countrymen without a love-plot. Perhaps the Samson of Milton and the Athalia of Racine might have been his guides in such an attempt.<sup>4</sup> But two poets in an age are not sufficient to revive

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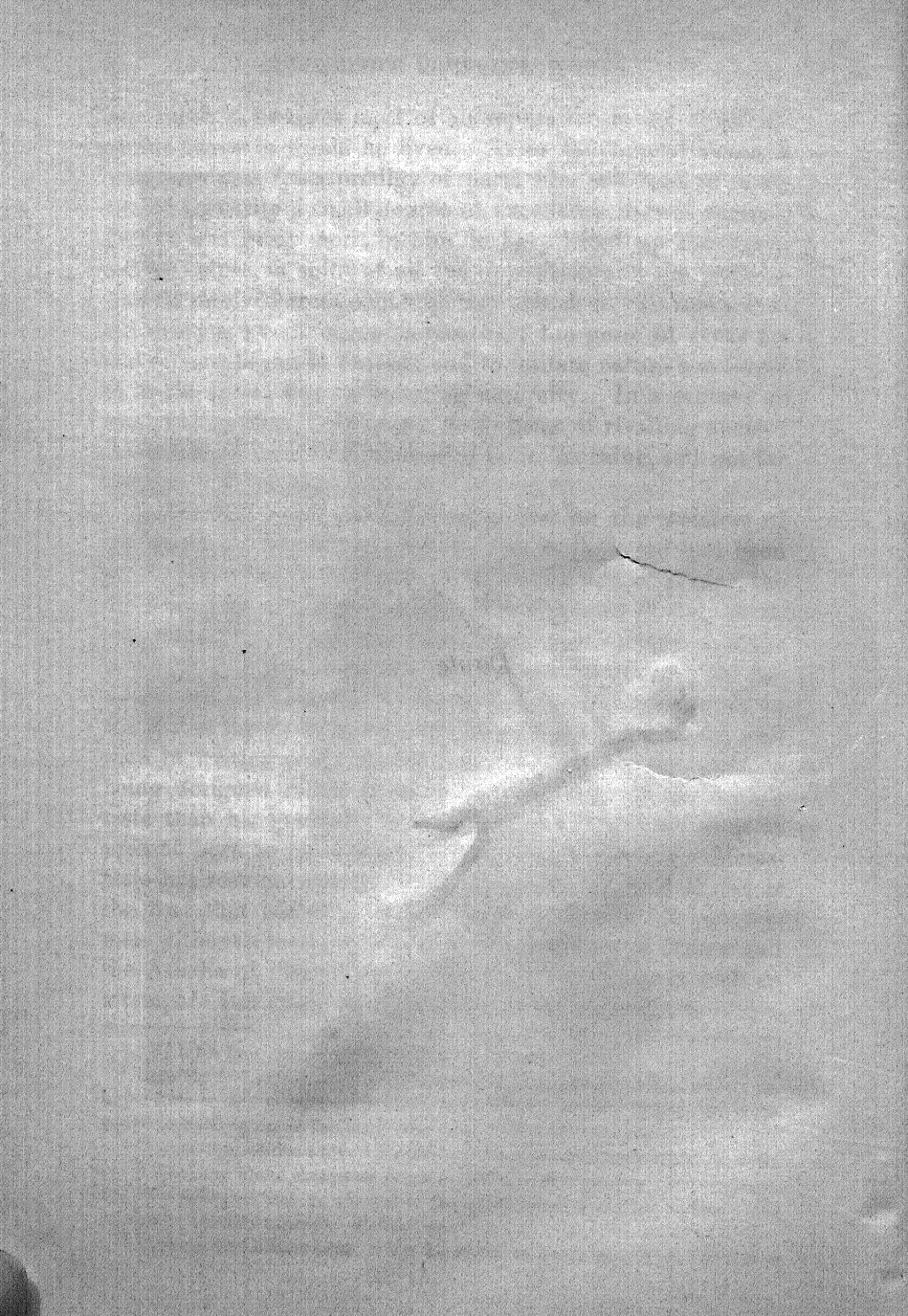
<sup>1</sup> "Be it his greatest merit, therefore, to," etc.—*First Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> Here the first edition adds, commencing a new paragraph: "But, while I describe Italy as then fallen from her former excellence, I cannot restrain the pleasure of mentioning one or two poets who seem born to redeem," etc.

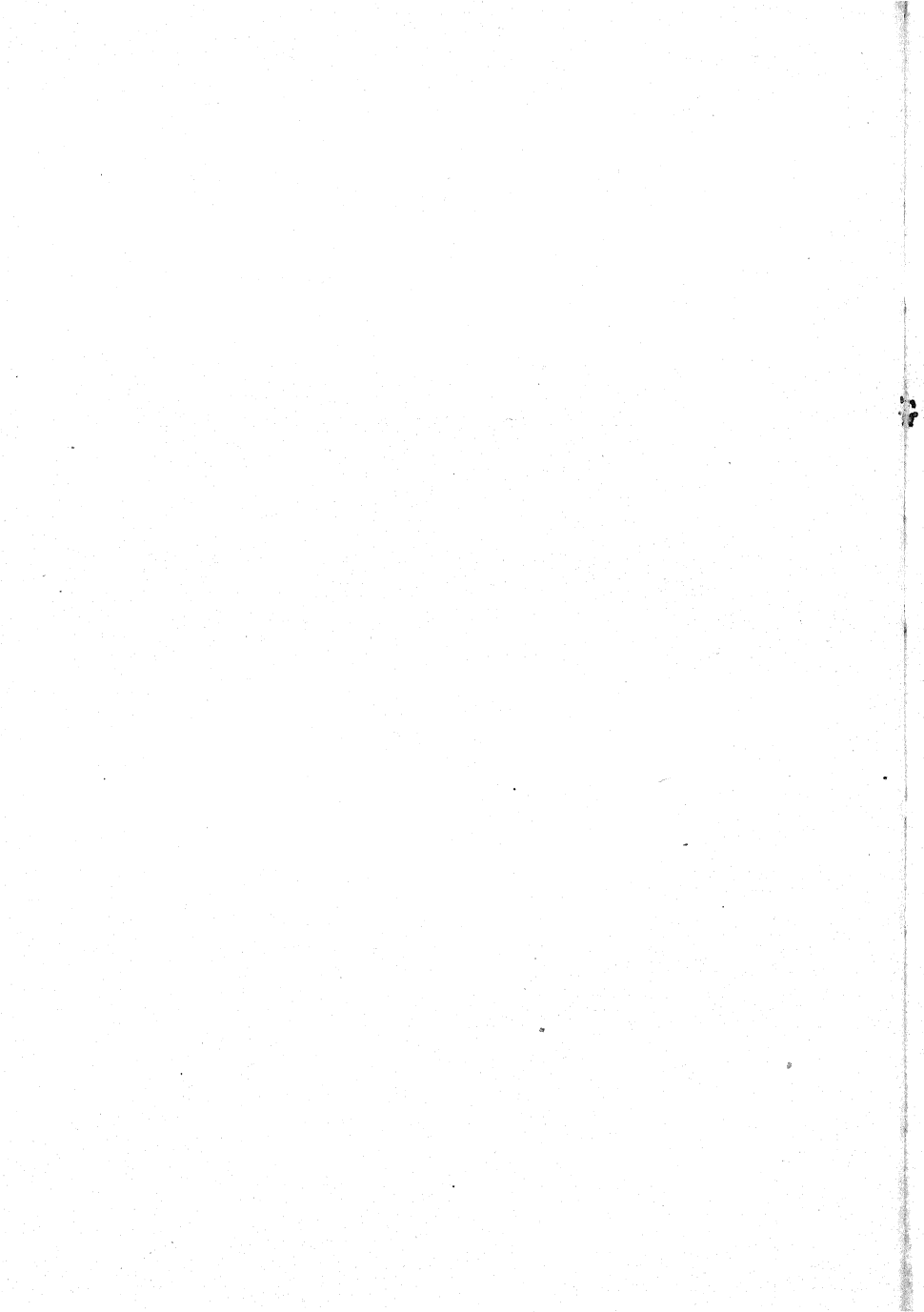
<sup>3</sup> Here the first edition adds: "No poet ever painted more conformably to truth, nor is there any whose characters speak a more heartfelt passion. His language, also, if a foreigner may be allowed to determine, excels even that of Tasso; the scenery is infinitely superior. Maffei," etc.

<sup>4</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Yet he seems as much inferior to either as a

*Dante*









the splendor of decaying genius; nor should we consider them as the standard by which to characterize a nation. Our measures of literary reputation must be taken rather from that numerous class of men who, placed above the vulgar, are yet beneath the great, and who confer fame on others without receiving any portion of it themselves.

In Italy, then, we shall nowhere find a stronger passion for the arts of taste, yet no country making more feeble efforts to promote either. The Virtuosi and Filosofi seem to have divided the Encyclopædia between each other, both inviolably attached to their respective pursuits; and from an opposition of character, each holding the other in the most sovereign contempt. The Virtuosi, professed critics of beauty in the works of art, judge of medals by the smell, and pictures by feeling: in statuary, hang over a fragment with the most ardent gaze of admiration; though wanting the head and the other extremities, if dug from a ruin, the Torso becomes inestimable. An unintelligible monument of Etruscan barbarity cannot be sufficiently prized; and anything from Herculaneum excites rapture. When the intellectual taste is thus decayed, its relishes become false, and, like that of sense, nothing will satisfy but what is best suited to feed<sup>1</sup> the disease.

Poetry is no longer among them an imitation of what we see, but of what a visionary might wish. The zephyr breathes the most exquisite perfume, the trees wear eternal verdure; fauns, and dryads, and hamadryads, stand ready to fan the sultry shepherdess, who has forgot, indeed, the prettinesses with which Guarini's<sup>2</sup> shepherdesses have been reproached, but is so simple and innocent as often to have no meaning. Happy country, where the pastoral age begins to revive! where the wits even of Rome are united into a rural group of nymphs and swains, under the appellation of modern Arcadians! where, in the midst of porticos, processions, and caval-

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poet, as the subject of his Merope is more happily chosen. Two poets, however, in an age," etc.

<sup>1</sup> "To palliate or feed."—*First Edition.*

<sup>2</sup> "Former Italian."—*First Edition.*

cares, abbés turn shepherds, and shepherdesses, without sheep, indulge their innocent *divertimenti*!<sup>1</sup>

The Filosofi are entirely different from the former. As those pretend to have got their knowledge from conversing with the living and polite, so these boast of having theirs from books and study. Bred up all their lives in colleges, they have there learned to think in track, servilely to follow the leader of their sect, and only to adopt such opinions as their universities or the inquisition are pleased to allow. By these means they are behind the rest of Europe in several modern improvements; afraid to think for themselves; and their universities seldom admit opinions as true till universally received among the rest of mankind. In short, were I to personize my ideas of learning in this country, I would represent it in the tawdry habits of the stage, or else in the more homely guise of bearded school philosophy.

## CHAPTER V.

### ON POLITE LEARNING IN GERMANY.

If we examine the state of learning in Germany, we shall find that the Germans early discovered a passion for polite literature; but unhappily, like conquerors, who invading the dominions of others, leave their own to desolation, instead of studying the German tongue, they continue to write in Latin. Thus, while they cultivated an obsolete language, and vainly labored to apply it to modern manners, they neglected their own.

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<sup>1</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Perhaps, while I am writing, a shepherdess of threescore is listening to the pastoral tale of a French abbé; a warm imagination might paint her in all the splendor of ripened beauty, reclining on a pasteboard rock; might fancy her lover, with looks inexpressibly tender, ravishing a kiss from the snowy softness of one of her hands, while the other holds a crook according to pastoral decorum. Amid such frippery as this, there was no place for friendless Metastasio; he has left Italy, and the genius of nature seems to have left it with him."

At the same time, also, they began at the wrong end, I mean by being commentators; and though they have given many instances of their industry, they have scarcely afforded any of genius. If criticism could have improved the taste of a people, the Germans would have been the most polite nation alive. We shall nowhere behold the learned wear a more important appearance than here; nowhere more dignified with professorships, or dressed out in the fopperies of scholastic finery. However, they seem to earn all the honors of this kind which they enjoy. Their assiduity is unparalleled; and did they<sup>1</sup> employ half those hours on study which they bestow on reading, we might be induced to pity as well as praise their painful pre-eminence. But, guilty of a fault too common to great readers, they write through volumes, while they do not think through a page. Never fatigued themselves, they think the reader can never be weary; so they drone on, saying all that can be said on the subject, not selecting what may be advanced to the purpose. Were angels to write books, they never would write folios.

But let the Germans have their due; if they are dull, no nation alive assumes a more laudable solemnity, or better understands all the decorums of stupidity. Let the discourse of a professor run on never so heavily, it cannot be irksome to his dozing pupils, who frequently lend him sympathetic nods of approbation. I have sometimes attended their disputes at graduation. On this occasion they often dispense with their gravity, and seem really all alive. The disputes are managed between the followers of Cartesius, whose exploded system they continue to call the new philosophy, and those of Aristotle. Though both parties are in the wrong, they argue with an obstinacy worthy the cause of truth; Nego, Probo, and Distinguo grow loud; the disputants become warm, the moderator cannot be heard, the audience take part in the debate, till at last the whole hall buzzes with sophistry and error.<sup>2</sup>

There are, it is true, several societies in this country which

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<sup>1</sup> "The learned of this country."—*First Edition.*

<sup>2</sup> "Erroneous philosophy."—*First Edition.*

are chiefly calculated to promote knowledge.<sup>1</sup> His late majesty, as Elector of Hanover,<sup>2</sup> has established one at Gotttingen, at an expense of not less than a hundred thousand pounds. This university has already pickled monsters and dissected live puppies without number. Their transactions have been published in the learned world at proper intervals since their institution; and will, it is hoped, one day give them just reputation. But had the fourth part of the immense sum above mentioned been given in proper rewards to genius, in some neighboring countries, it would have rendered the name of the donor immortal, and added to the real interests of society.<sup>3</sup>

Yet it ought to be observed that, of late, learning has been patronized here by a prince, who, in the humblest station, would have been the first of mankind. The society established by the King of Prussia, at Berlin, is one of the finest literary institutions that any age or nation has produced. This academy comprehends all the sciences under four different classes; and although the object of each is different, and admits of being separately treated, yet these classes mutually influence the progress of each other, and concur in the same general design. Experimental philosophy, mathematics, metaphysics, and polite literature are here carried on together.<sup>4</sup> The members are not collected from among the students of some obscure seminary, or the wits of a metropolis, but chosen from all the literati of Europe, supported by the bounty, and ornamented by the productions of their royal founder. We can easily discern how much such an institution excels any other now subsisting. One fundamental error among societies of this kind is their addicting themselves to one branch of science, or some particular part of polite learning. Thus,

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<sup>1</sup> "Natural knowledge."—*First Edition.*

<sup>2</sup> "The Elector of Hanover."—*First Edition.*

<sup>3</sup> "But let me cease from censure, since I have here so fine an opportunity of praise. Even in the midst of Germany, true learning has found an asylum, and taste and genius have been patronized by a prince, who," etc.—*First Edition.*

<sup>4</sup> "And mutually illustrate and strengthen and adorn each other."—*First Edition.*

in Germany, there are nowhere so many establishments of this nature; but as they generally profess the promotion of natural or medical knowledge, he who reads their *Acta* will only find an obscure farrago of experiment, most frequently terminated by no resulting phenomena. To make experiments is, I own, the only way to promote natural knowledge; but to treasure up every unsuccessful inquiry into nature, or to communicate every experiment without conclusion, is not to promote science, but oppress it.<sup>1</sup> Had the members of these societies enlarged their plans, and taken in art as well as science, one part of knowledge would have repressed any faulty luxuriance in the other, and all would have mutually assisted each other's promotion. Besides, the society which, with a contempt of all collateral assistance, admits of members skilled in one science only, whatever their diligence of labor may be, will lose much time in the discovery of such truths as are well known already to the learned in a different line; consequently, their progress must be slow in gaining a proper eminence from which to view their subject, and their strength will be exhausted in attaining the station whence they should have set out. With regard to the Royal Society of London, the greatest, and perhaps the oldest institution of the kind, had it widened the basis of its institution, though they might not have propagated more discoveries, they would probably have delivered them in a more pleasing and compendious form. They would have been free from the contempt of the ill-natured and the raillery of the wit, for which even candor must allow there is but too much foundation. The Berlin academy is subject to none of all these inconveniences, but every one of its individuals is in a capacity of deriving more from the common stock than he contributes to it, while each academician serves as a check upon the rest of his fellows.

Yet, very probably, even this fine institution will soon decay. As it rose, so it will decline with its great encourager.

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<sup>1</sup> "But confuse it. Not to lift learning from obscurity, but with additional weight to oppress it."—*First Edition*.

The society, if I may so speak, is artificially supported. The introduction of foreigners of learning was right; but in adopting a foreign language also, I mean the French, in which all the transactions are to be published and questions debated, in this there was an error. As I have already hinted, the language of the natives of every country should be also the language of its polite learning.<sup>1</sup> To figure in polite learning, every country should make their own language from their own manners; nor will they ever succeed by introducing that of another which has been formed from manners which are different. Besides, an academy composed of foreigners must still be recruited from abroad, unless all the natives of the country to which it belongs are in a capacity of becoming candidates for its honors or rewards. While France, therefore, continues to supply Berlin, polite learning will flourish; but when royal favor is withdrawn, learning will return to its natural country.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OF POLITE LEARNING IN HOLLAND, AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES OF EUROPE.

HOLLAND, at first view, appears to have some pretensions to polite learning. It may be regarded as the great emporium, not less of literature than of every other commodity. Here, though destitute of what may be properly called a language of their own, all the languages are understood, cultivated, and spoken. All useful inventions in arts, and new discoveries in science, are published here almost as soon as at the places which first produced them. Its individuals have the same faults, however, with the Germans, of making more use of

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<sup>1</sup> "I may be supposed to carry the thought too far when I say that to figure," etc.—*First Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> This, in the first edition, was part of Chapter IV.

their memory than their judgment. The chief employment of their literati is to criticise, or answer, the new performances which appear elsewhere.

A dearth of wit in France or England naturally produces a scarcity in Holland. What Ovid says of Echo, may be applied here,

—"nec reticere loquenti,  
Nec prior ipsa loqui didicit"—

they wait till something new comes out from others; examine its merits, and reject it, or make it reverberate through the rest of Europe.

After all, I know not whether they should be allowed any national character for polite learning. All their taste is derived to them from neighboring nations, and that in a language not their own. They somewhat resemble their brokers, who trade for immense sums without having any capital.

The other countries of Europe may be considered as immersed in ignorance, or making but feeble efforts to rise. Spain has long fallen from amazing Europe with her wit, to amusing them with the greatness of her catholic credulity. Rome considers her as the most favorite of all her children, and school divinity still reigns there in triumph. In spite of all attempts of the Marquis d'Ensenada, who saw with regret the barbarity of his countrymen, and bravely offered to oppose it by introducing new systems of learning, and suppressing the seminaries of monastic ignorance; in spite of the ingenuity of Padré Feyjoo,<sup>1</sup> whose book of vulgar errors so finely exposes the monkish stupidity of the times—the religious have prevailed. Ensenada has been banished, and now lives in exile.<sup>2</sup> Feyjoo has incurred the hatred and contempt of every bigot whose errors he has attempted to oppose, and feels no doubt the unremitting displeasure of the priesthood.

<sup>1</sup> Father Feyjoo (called the Spanish Addison) published his speculations in the form of popular essays. He died in 1765. An edition of his works, in 33 vols. 8vo, was published at Madrid in 1780. See Vol. V. p. 56

<sup>2</sup> The Marquis d'Ensenada was permitted to return to Spain a few months previous to his death, which took place at Madrid in 1762.

Persecution is a tribute the great must ever pay for pre-eminence.

It is a little extraordinary, however, how Spain, whose genius is naturally fine, should be so much behind the rest of Europe in this particular; or why school divinity should hold its ground there for nearly six hundred years. The reason must be, that philosophical opinions, which are otherwise transient, acquire stability in proportion as they are connected with the laws of the country; and philosophy and law have nowhere been so closely united as here.

Sweden has of late made some attempts in polite learning in its own language. Count Tessin's instructions to the prince, his pupil, are no bad beginning.<sup>1</sup> If the Muses can fix their residence so far northward, perhaps no country bids so fair for their reception. They have, I am told, a language rude but energetic; if so, it will bear a polish. They have also a jealous sense of liberty, and that strength of thinking peculiar to northern climates, without its attendant ferocity. They will certainly in time produce somewhat great, if their intestine divisions do not unhappily prevent them.

The history of polite learning in Denmark may be comprised in the life of one single man; it rose and fell with the late famous Baron Holberg.<sup>2</sup> This was, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary personages that has done honor to the present century. His being the son of a private sentinel did not abate the ardor of his ambition, for he learned to read, though without a master. Upon the death of his father, being left entirely destitute, he was involved in all that distress which is common among the poor, and of which the great have scarcely any idea. However, though only a boy of nine years old, he still persisted in pursuing his studies, travelled about from school to school, and begged his learning and his bread. When at the age of seventeen, instead of applying himself to any of the lower occupations, which seem

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<sup>1</sup> Count Tessin was born at Stockholm in 1695, and died in Sudermania in 1770. A translation into English of his "Letters to a Young Prince from his Governor," appeared in 1759, in 3 vols. 12mo.

<sup>2</sup> Baron Holberg died in 1754, while Goldsmith was at Leyden.



best adapted to such circumstances, he was resolved to travel for improvement from Norway, the place of his birth, to Copenhagen, the capital city of Denmark. He lived there by teaching French, at the same time avoiding no opportunity of improvement that his scanty funds could permit. But his ambition was not to be restrained, or his thirst of knowledge satisfied, until he had seen the world. Without money, recommendations, or friends, he undertook to set out upon his travels, and make the tour of Europe on foot. A good voice, and a trifling skill in music, were the only finances he had to support an undertaking so extensive; so he travelled by day, and at night sung at the doors of peasants' houses to get himself a lodging. In this manner, while yet very young, Holberg passed through France, Germany, and Holland; and coming over to England, took up his residence for two years in the University of Oxford. Here he subsisted by teaching French and music, and wrote his "Universal History," his earliest but worst performance. Furnished with all the learning of Europe, he at last thought proper to return to Copenhagen, where his ingenious productions quickly gained him that favor he deserved. He composed not less than eighteen comedies. Those in his own language are said to excel, and those which are translated into French have peculiar merit. He was honored with nobility, and enriched by the bounty of the king; so that a life begun in contempt and penury ended in opulence and esteem.

Thus we see in what a low state polite learning is in the countries I have mentioned; either past its prime, or not yet arrived at maturity. And though the sketch I have drawn be general, yet it was for the most part taken on the spot. I am sensible, however, of the impropriety of national reflection; and did not truth bias me more than inclination in this particular, I should, instead of the account already given, have presented the reader with a panegyric on many of the individuals of every country, whose merits deserve the warmest strains of praise. Apostol Zeno, Algarotti, Goldoni, Muratori, and Stay, in Italy; Haller, Klopstock, and Rabner, in Germany; Muschenbrook and Gaubius, in Holland—all deserve

the highest applause.<sup>1</sup> Men like these, united by one bond, pursuing one design, spend their labor and their lives in making their fellow-creatures happy, and in repairing the breaches caused by ambition. In this light, the meanest philosopher, though all his possessions are his lamp or his cell, is more truly valuable than he whose name echoes to the shout of the million, and who stands in all the glare of admiration. In this light, though poverty and contemptuous neglect are all the wages of his good-will from mankind, yet the rectitude of his intention is an ample recompense; and self-applause for the present, and the alluring prospect of fame for futurity, reward his labors. The perspective of life brightens upon us when terminated by an object so charming. Every intermediate image of want, banishment, or sorrow receives a lustre from its distant influence. With this in view, the patriot, philosopher, and poet have often looked with calmness on disgrace and famine, and rested on their straw with cheerful serenity. Even the last terrors of departing nature abate of their severity, and look kindly on him who considers his sufferings as a passport to immortality, and lays his sorrows on the bed of fame.

## CHAPTER VII.<sup>2</sup>

### OF POLITE LEARNING IN FRANCE.

We have hitherto seen that, wherever the poet was permitted to begin by improving his native language, polite learn-

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<sup>1</sup> "But it was my design rather to give an idea of the spirit of learning in those countries, than a dry catalogue of authors' names and writings. But let me cease a moment from considering this worthy, however erroneous, part of mankind, on that side alone in which they are exposed to censure, and survey them as the friends of man; while the great and the avaricious of this world are contriving means to aggravate national hatred—and, perhaps, fonder of satisfying vanity than justice, are willing to make the world uneasy, because themselves are so—these harmless instruments of peace united by one bond," etc.—*First Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> This was originally Chapter VIII. Chapter VII. of the first edition was omitted by Goldsmith, and is in this edition printed in an Appendix. See p. 79.

ing flourished; but where the critic undertook the same task, it has never risen to any degree of perfection. Let us now examine the merits of modern learning in France and England; where, though it may be on the decline, yet it is still capable of retrieving much of its former splendor. In other places learning has not yet been planted, or has suffered a total decay. To attempt amendment there would be only like the application of remedies to an insensible or a mortified part; but here there is still life, and there is hope. And, indeed, the French themselves are so far from giving in to any despondence of this kind, that, on the contrary, they admire the progress they are daily making in every science.<sup>1</sup> That levity for which we are apt to despise this nation is probably the principal source of their happiness. An agreeable oblivion of past pleasures, a freedom from solicitude about future ones, and a poignant zest of every present enjoyment, if they be not philosophy, are at least excellent substitutes. By this they are taught to regard the period in which they live with admiration. The present manners and the present conversation surpass all that preceded.<sup>2</sup> A similar enthusiasm as strongly tinctures their learning and their taste. While we, with a despondence characteristic of our nature, are for removing back British excellence to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, our more happy rivals of the Continent cry up the writers of the present times with rapture, and regard the age of Louis XV. as the true Augustan age of France.

The truth is, their present writers have not fallen so far short of the merits of their ancestors as ours have done. That self-sufficiency now mentioned may have been of service to them in this particular. By fancying themselves superior to their ancestors, they have been encouraged to enter the lists with confidence; and by not being dazzled at the splendor of another's reputation, have sometimes had sagacity to mark out an unbeaten path to fame for themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> The passages preceding *figure 1* are not in the first edition.

<sup>2</sup> Here the first edition adds: "A Frenchman is as little displeased with everything about him as with his own person or existence. This agreeable enthusiasm tinctures not only their manners, but their learning and taste."

Other causes also may be assigned, that their second growth of genius is still more vigorous than ours. Their encouragements to merit are more skilfully directed; the link of patronage and learning still continues unbroken. The French nobility have certainly a most pleasing way of satisfying the vanity of an author, without indulging his avarice. A man of literary merit is sure of being caressed by the great, though seldom enriched. His pension from the crown just supplies half a competence, and the sale of his labors make some small addition to his circumstances. Thus the author leads a life of splendid poverty, and seldom becomes wealthy or indolent enough to discontinue an exertion of those abilities by which he rose. With the English it is different. Our writers of rising merit are generally neglected, while the few of an established reputation are overpaid by luxurious affluence. The young encounter every hardship which generally attends upon aspiring indigence; the old enjoy the vulgar, and perhaps the more prudent satisfaction, of putting riches in competition with fame. Those are often seen to spend their youth in want and obscurity; these are sometimes found to lead an old age of indolence and avarice. But such treatment must naturally be expected from Englishmen, whose national character it is to be slow and cautious in making friends, but violent in friendships once contracted. The English nobility, in short, are often known to give greater rewards to genius than the French, who, however, are much more judicious in the application of their empty favors.

The fair sex in France have also not a little contributed to prevent the decline of taste and literature, by expecting such qualifications in their admirers. A man of fashion at Paris, however contemptible we may think him here, must be acquainted with the reigning modes of philosophy as well as of dress, to be able to entertain his mistress agreeably. The sprightly pedants are not to be caught by dumb show,<sup>1</sup> by the squeeze of the hand, or the ogling of a broad eye; but

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<sup>1</sup> "The charming pedants are not to be caught, like some damsels to be seen in Holland, by dumb show."—*First Edition.*

must be pursued at once, through all the labyrinths of the Newtonian system, or the metaphysics of Locke.<sup>1</sup> I have seen as bright a circle of beauty at the chemical lectures of Rouelle,<sup>2</sup> as gracing the court of Versailles. And, indeed, wisdom never appears so charming as when graced and protected by beauty.

To these advantages may be added the reception of their language in the different courts of Europe. An author who excels is sure of having all the polite for admirers, and is encouraged to write by the pleasing expectation of universal fame. Add to this that those countries who can make nothing good from their own language have lately begun to write in this, some of whose productions contribute to support the present literary reputation of France.<sup>3</sup>

There are, therefore, many among the French who do honor to the present age, and whose writings will be transmitted to posterity with an ample share of fame. Some of the most celebrated are as follow :

Voltaire, whose voluminous yet spirited productions are too well known to require a eulogy. Does he not resemble the champion mentioned by Xenophon, of great reputation in all the gymnastic exercises united, but inferior to each champion singly, who excels only in one ?

Montesquieu, a name equally deserving fame with the former. The "Spirit of Laws" is an instance how much genius is able to lead learning. His system has been adopted by the literati ; and yet, is it not possible for opinions equally plausible to be formed upon opposite principles, if a genius like his could be found to attempt such an undertaking ? He seems more a poet than a philosopher.

Rousseau, of Geneva, a professed man-hater, or more proper-

<sup>1</sup> "And still more the variations of female inclination."—*First Edition.*

<sup>2</sup> "An eminent chemist, born in 1708, at Matthieu, near Caen, in Normandy; died at Paris in 1770.

<sup>3</sup> Here, in the first edition, this paragraph occurs : "The age of Louis XIV., notwithstanding these advantages, is still superior. It is, indeed, a misfortune for a fine writer to be born in a period so enlightened as ours. The harvest of wit is gathered in, and little is left for him, except to glean what others have thought unworthy their bringing away. Yet there are still some among the French," etc.

ly speaking, a philosopher enraged with one-half of mankind, because they unavoidably make the other half unhappy. Such sentiments are generally the result of much good-nature and little experience.

Piron, an author possessed of as much wit as any man alive, yet with as little prudence to turn it to his own advantage. A comedy of his, called "*La Métromanie*," is the best theatrical production that has appeared of late in Europe. But I know not whether I should most commend his genius, or censure his obscenity. His "*Ode à Priape*" has justly excluded him from a place in the Academy of Belles-lettres. However, the good-natured Montesquieu, by his interest, procured the starving bard a trifling pension. His own epitaph was all the revenge he took upon the Academy for being repulsed.

"Cy-git Piron, qui ne fut jamais rien :  
Pas même Académicien."

Crébillon, junior, a writer of real merit, but guilty of the same indelicate faults with the former. Wit employed in dressing up obscenity is like the art used in painting a corpse; it may be thus rendered tolerable to one sense, but fails not quickly to offend some other.

Gresset, agreeable and easy. His comedy called the "*Méchant*," and a humorous poem entitled "*Ver-vert*," have original merit.<sup>1</sup> He was bred a Jesuit; but his wit procured his dismissal from the society. This last work particularly could expect no pardon from the convent, being a satire against nunneries.

D'Alembert has united an extensive skill in scientific

<sup>1</sup> "'*Le Méchant*,' of Gresset, is one of the most elegant productions of the comic muse, and presents an ingenious satire upon Parisian manners as they existed previously to the Revolution. The poetry is excellent, and there is no play of which so many lines have become proverbial, except, perhaps, '*La Métromanie*.'"—*Quart. Rev.* vol. xii. p. 131.

"I must again and again repeat that it is on account of the exquisite skill and humor and pleasantry of the use made of the machinery of the sylphs, that Pope's '*Rape of the Lock*' has exceeded all the heroi-comic poems in all languages. The '*Ver-vert*' of Gresset, in point of delicate satire, is perhaps next to it."—JOSEPH WARTON.

learning with the most refined taste for the polite arts. His excellence in both has procured him a seat in each Academy.

Diderot is an elegant writer and subtile reasoner. He is the supposed author of the famous Thesis which the Abbé Prade sustained before the doctors of the Sorbonne. It was levelled against Christianity, and the Sorbonne too hastily gave it their sanction. They perceived its purport, however, when it was too late. The college was brought into some contempt, and the abbé obliged to take refuge at the court of Berlin.

The Marquis d'Argens attempts to add the character of a philosopher to the vices of a debauchee.

The catalogue might be increased with several other authors of merit, such as Marivaux, Le Franc, Saint Foix, Destouches, and Modonville; but let it suffice to say that by these the character of the present age is tolerably supported. Though their poets seldom rise to fine enthusiasm, they never sink into absurdity; though they fail to astonish, they are generally possessed of talents to please.

The age of Louis XIV., notwithstanding these respectable names, is still vastly superior. For, beside the general tendency of critical corruption, which shall be spoken of by-and-by, there are other symptoms which indicate a decline.<sup>1</sup> There is, for instance, a fondness of scepticism which runs through the works of some of their most applauded writers, and which the numerous class of their imitators have contributed to diffuse. Nothing can be a more certain sign that genius is in the wane, than its being obliged to fly to paradox for support, and attempting to be erroneously agreeable. A man who, with all the impotence of wit and all the eager desires of infidelity, writes against the religion of his country, may raise doubts, but will never give conviction; all he can do is to render society less happy than he found it. It was a good manner which the father of the late poet Saint Foix took to reclaim his son from this juvenile error. The young

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<sup>1</sup> The preceding passage stands thus in the first edition: "But although taste is still cultivated there with assiduity, I must not conceal those symptoms which seem manifestly tending to promote its decline. There is," etc.

poet had shut himself up for some time in his study; and his father, willing to know what had engaged his attention so closely, upon entering found him busied in drawing up a new system of religion, and endeavoring to show the absurdity of that already established. The old man knew by experience that it was useless to endeavor to convince a vain young man by right reason, so only desired his company up-stairs. When come into the father's apartment, he takes his son by the hand, and drawing back a curtain at one end of the room, discovered a crucifix exquisitely painted. "My son," says he, "you desire to change the religion of your country—behold the fate of a reformer."<sup>1</sup> The truth is, vanity is more apt to misguide men than false reasoning. As some would rather be conspicuous in a mob than unnoticed even in a privy council, so others choose rather to be foremost in the retinue of error than follow in the train of truth.<sup>2</sup> What influence the conduct of such writers may have on the morals of a people, is not my business here to determine. Certain I am, that it has a manifest tendency to subvert the literary merits of the country in view. The change of religion in every nation has hitherto produced barbarism and ignorance; and such will be probably its consequences in every future period. For when the laws and opinions of society are made to clash, harmony is dissolved, and all the parts of peace unavoidably crushed in the encounter.


The writers of this country have also of late fallen into a method of considering every part of art and science as arising from simple principles. The success of Montesquieu, and one or two more, has induced all the subordinate ranks of genius into vicious imitation. To this end they turn to our view that side of the subject which contributes to support their hypothesis, while the objections are generally passed over in silence. Thus a universal system rises from a partial representation of the question; a whole is concluded from a part; a book appears entirely new, and the fancy-built fabric is

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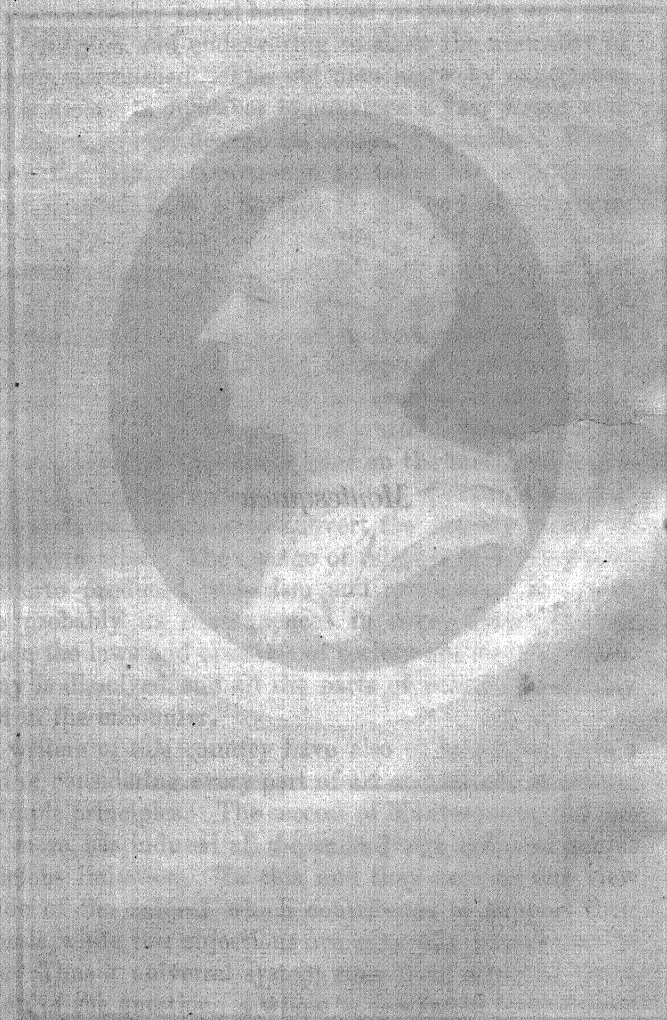
<sup>1</sup> "Of an innovator."—*First Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> The first edition adds: "And prefer the applause of great stupidity to that approbation which virtue ever pays itself."



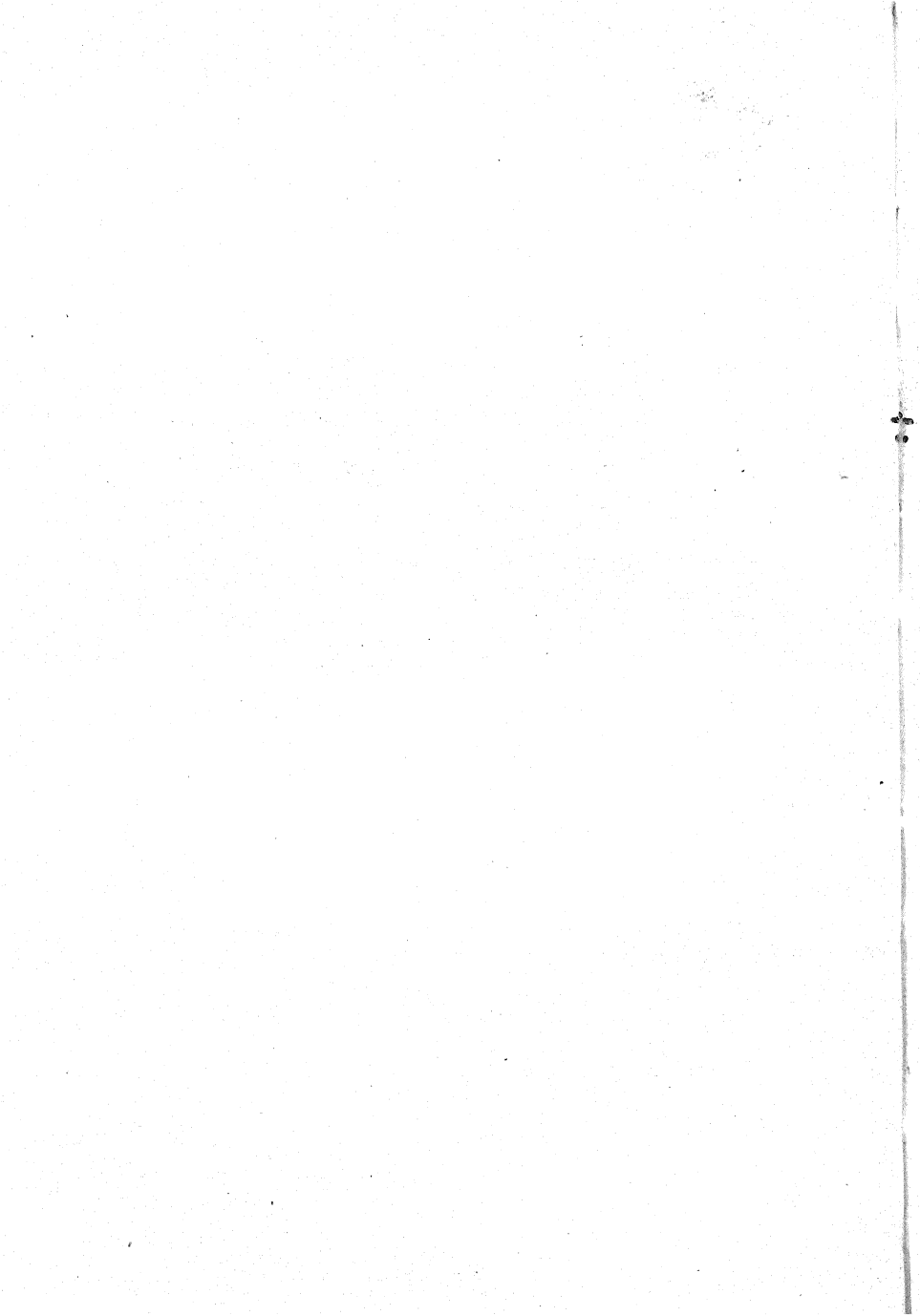
A faint, circular portrait of Montesquieu is visible in the background, showing a man with curly hair and a high-collared garment.

*Montesquieu*





MONTESQUIEU.



styled for a short time very ingenious. In this manner we have seen of late almost every subject in morals, natural history, politics, economy, and commerce treated. Subjects naturally proceeding on many principles, and some even opposite to each other, are all taught to proceed along the line of systematic simplicity, and continue, like other agreeable falsehoods, extremely pleasing till they are detected.

I must still add another fault, of a nature somewhat similar to the former. As those above mentioned are for contracting a single science into system, so those I am going to speak of are for drawing up a system of all the sciences united. Such undertakings as these are carried on by different writers, cemented into one body, and concurring in the same design by the mediation of a bookseller. From these inauspicious combinations proceed those monsters of learning, the *Trevoux*, *Encyclopédies*, and *Bibliothèques* of the age. In making these, men of every rank in literature are employed, wits and dunces contribute their share, and Diderot, as well as Desmaretz, are candidates for oblivion. The genius of the first supplies the gale of favor, and the latter adds the useful ballast of stupidity. By such means the enormous mass heavily makes its way among the public, and, to borrow a bookseller's phrase, "the whole impression moves off." These great collections of learning may serve to make us inwardly repine at our own ignorance; may serve, when gilt and lettered, to adorn the lower shelves of a regular library; but woe to the reader who, not daunted at the immense distance between one great pasteboard and the other, opens the volume, and explores his way through a region so extensive, but barren of entertainment! No unexpected landscape there to delight the imagination! no diversity of prospect to cheat the painful journey! He sees the wide-extended desert lie before him; what is past only increases his terror of what is to come. His course is not half finished: he looks behind him with affright, and forward with despair. Perseverance is at last overcome, and a night of oblivion lends its friendly aid to terminate the perplexity.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OF LEARNING IN GREAT BRITAIN.

To acquire a character for learning among the English at present it is necessary to know much more than is either important or useful.<sup>1</sup> It seems the spirit of the times for men here to exhaust their natural sagacity in exploring the intricacies of another man's thought, and thus never to have leisure to think for themselves. Others have carried on learning from that stage where the good-sense of our ancestors have thought it too minute or too speculative to instruct or amuse. By the industry of such, the sciences, which in themselves are easy of access, affright the learner with the severity of their appearance. He sees them surrounded with speculation and subtlety, placed there by their professors as if with a view of deterring his approach. Hence it happens that the generality of readers fly from the scholar to the compiler, who offers them a more safe and speedy conveyance.

From this fault also arises that mutual contempt between the scholar and the man of the world, of which every day's experience furnisheth instances.

The man of taste, however, stands neutral in this controversy. He seems placed in a middle station, between the world and the cell, between learning and common-sense. He teaches the vulgar on what part of a character to lay the emphasis of praise, and the scholar where to point his application so as to deserve it. By his means even the philosopher acquires popular applause, and all that are truly great the admiration of posterity. By means of polite learning alone, the patriot and the hero, the man who praiseth virtue and he who practises it, who fights successfully for his country, or

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition adds: "The absurd passion of being deemed profound has done more injury to all kinds of science than is generally imagined. Some thus exhaust," etc.

who dies in its defence, becomes immortal.' But this taste now seems cultivated with less ardor than formerly, and consequently the public must one day expect to see the advantages arising from it, and the exquisite pleasures it affords our leisure, entirely annihilated. For if, as it should seem, the rewards of genius are improperly directed; if those who are capable of supporting the honor of the times by their writings prefer opulence to fame; if the stage should be shut to writers of merit, and open only to interest or intrigue; if such should happen to be the vile complexion of the times (and that it is nearly so we shall shortly see), the very virtue of the age will be forgotten by posterity, and nothing remembered except our filling a chasm in the registers of time, or having served to continue the species.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OF REWARDING GENIUS IN ENGLAND.

THERE is nothing authors are more apt to lament than want of encouragement from the age. Whatever their differences in other respects, they are all ready to unite in this complaint, and each indirectly offers himself as an instance of the truth of his assertion.

The benefited divine, whose wants are only imaginary, expostulates as bitterly as the poorest author.<sup>2</sup> Should interest or good-fortune advance the divine to a bishopric, or the poor son of Parnassus into that place which the other has resigned, both are authors no longer; the one goes to prayers once a

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<sup>1</sup> Here the first edition adds, commencing a new paragraph: "Let none affect to despise future fame; the actions of even the lowest part of mankind testify a desire of this kind. Wealth, titles, and several paltry advantages are secured for posterity, who can only give their applause in return. If all ranks, therefore, are inspired with this passion, how great should his encouragement be who is capable of conferring it not only upon the most deserving, but even upon the age in which he lives. Yet the honest ambition of being admired by posterity cannot be gratified without continual efforts in the present age to deserve it," etc.

<sup>2</sup> "That ever snuffed his candle with finger and thumb."—*First Edition.*



day, kneels upon cushions of velvet, and thanks gracious Heaven for having made the circumstances of all mankind so extremely happy; the other batten on all the delicacies of life, enjoys his wife and his easy-chair, and sometimes, for the sake of conversation, deploras the luxury of these degenerate days.

All encouragements to merit are, therefore, misapplied which make the author too rich to continue his profession. There can be nothing more just than the old observation, that authors, like running horses, should be fed, but not fattened. If we would continue them in our service, we should reward them with a little money and a great deal of praise, still keeping their avarice subservient to their ambition. Not that I think a writer incapable of filling an employment with dignity; I would only insinuate that, when made a bishop or statesman, he will continue to please us as a writer no longer; as, to resume a former allusion, the running horse, when fattened, will still be fit for very useful purposes, though unqualified for a courser.

No nation gives greater encouragements to learning than we do; yet, at the same time, none are so injudicious in the application. We seem to confer them with the same view that statesmen have been known to grant employments at court, rather as bribes to silence than incentives to emulation. Upon this principle, all our magnificent endowments of colleges are erroneous; and at best, more frequently enrich the prudent than reward the ingenious. A lad whose passions are not strong enough in youth to mislead him from that path of science which his tutors, and not his inclinations, have chalked out, by four or five years' perseverance may probably obtain every advantage and honor his college can bestow. I forget whether the simile has been used before, but I would compare the man whose youth has been thus passed in the tranquillity of dispassionate prudence, to liquors which never ferment, and consequently continue always muddy.<sup>1</sup> Pas-

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<sup>1</sup> "His career might have been compared to that fermentation in liquors, which grow muddy before they brighten; but it must also be confessed that those liquors which never ferment are seldom clear."—GOLDSMITH, *Life of Bolingbroke*.



sions may raise a commotion in the youthful breast, but they disturb only to refine it. However this be, mean talents are often rewarded in colleges with an easy subsistence. The candidates or preferments of this kind often regard their admission as a patent for future indolence;<sup>1</sup> so that a life begun in studious labor is often continued in luxurious indolence.<sup>2</sup>

Among the universities abroad, I have ever observed their riches and their learning in a reciprocal proportion, their stupidity and pride increasing with their opulence. Happening once, in conversation with Gaubius of Leyden, to mention the college of Edinburgh, he began by complaining that all the English students which formerly came to his university now went entirely there; and the fact surprised him more, as Leyden was now as well as ever furnished with masters excellent in their respective professions. He concluded by asking if the professors of Edinburgh were rich? I replied that the salary of a professor there seldom amounted to more than thirty pounds a year. "Poor men," says he, "I heartily wish they were better provided for; until they become rich, we can have no expectation of English students at Leyden."

Premiums also proposed for literary excellence, when given as encouragements to boys, may be useful; but when designed as rewards to men, are certainly misapplied. We have seldom seen a performance of any great merit in consequence of rewards proposed in this manner. Who has ever observed a writer of any eminence a candidate in so precarious a contest? The man who knows the real value of his own genius will no more venture it upon an uncertainty, than he who knows the true use of a guinea will stake it with a sharper.<sup>3</sup>

Every encouragement given to stupidity, when known to be such, is also a negative insult upon genius. This appears in nothing more evident than the undistinguished success of those who solicit subscriptions. When first brought into fashion, subscriptions were conferred upon the ingenious alone, or

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<sup>1</sup> "Laziness."—*First Edition.*

<sup>2</sup> "Affluence."—*First Edition.*

<sup>3</sup> The first edition adds: "By throwing a main."

those who were reputed such. But at present we see them made a resource of indigence, and requested not as rewards of merit, but as a relief of distress. If tradesmen happen to want skill in conducting their own business, yet they are able to write a book: if mechanics want money, or ladies shame, they write books and solicit subscriptions. Scarcely a morning passes that proposals of this nature are not thrust into the half-opening doors of the rich, with perhaps a paltry petition, showing the author's wants, but not his merits. I would not willingly prevent that pity which is due to indigence; but while the streams of liberality are thus diffused, they must, in the end, become proportionably shallow.

What, then, are the proper encouragements of genius? I answer, subsistence and respect; for these are rewards congenial to its nature. Every animal has an aliment peculiarly suited to its constitution. The heavy ox seeks nourishment from earth; the light chameleon has been supposed to exist on air; a sparer diet even than this will satisfy the man of true genius, for he makes a luxurious banquet upon empty applause. It is this alone which has inspired all that ever was truly great and noble among us. It is, as Cicero finely calls it, the echo of virtue. Avarice is the passion of inferior natures; money the pay of the common herd. The author who draws his quill merely to take a purse, no more deserves success than he who presents a pistol.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "It requires a good deal of art and temper [in an author] to write consistently against the dictates of his own heart. Thus, notwithstanding our author talks so familiarly of *us*, the great, and affects to be thought to stand in the rank of patrons, we cannot help thinking that in more places than one he has betrayed, in himself, the man he so severely condemns for drawing his quill to take a purse. We are even so firmly convinced of this, that we dare put the question home to his conscience, whether he never experienced the unhappy situation he so feelingly describes in that of a literary understrapper? His remarking him as coming down from his garret to rummage the bookseller's shop for materials to work upon, and the knowledge he displays of his minutest labors, give great reason to suspect he may himself have had concerns in the *bad trade* of book-making. *Fronti nulla fides*. We have heard of many a writer who, 'patronized only by his bookseller,' has, nevertheless, affected the gentleman in print, and talked full as cavalierly as our author himself. We have even known one hardy enough publicly to stigmatize men of the first rank in literature for their immoralities, while conscious him-

When the link between patronage and learning was entire, then all who deserved fame were in a capacity of attaining it. When the great Somers was at the helm, patronage was fashionable among our nobility. The middle ranks of mankind, who generally imitate the great, then followed their example, and applauded from fashion, if not from feeling. I have heard an old poet<sup>1</sup> of that glorious age say that a dinner with his lordship has procured him invitations for the whole week following; that an airing in his patron's chariot has supplied him with a citizen's coach on every future occasion. For who would not be proud to entertain a man who kept so much good company?

But this link now seems entirely broken. Since the days of a certain prime-minister of inglorious memory,<sup>2</sup> the learned have been kept pretty much at a distance. A jockey, or a laced player, supplies the place of the scholar, poet, or the man of virtue. Those conversations, once the result of wisdom, wit, and innocence, are now turned to humbler topics, little more being expected from a companion than a laced coat, a pliant bow, and an immoderate friendship for—a well-served table.

self of laboring under the infamy of having, by the vilest and meanest actions, forfeited all pretensions to honor and honesty. If such men as these, boasting a liberal education, and pretending to genius, practise at the same time those arts which bring the sharper to the cart's tail or the pillory, need our author wonder that 'learning partakes the contempt of its professors.' If characters of this stamp are to be found among the learned, need any one be surprised that the great prefer the society of fiddlers, gamblers, and buffoons?"—*Kenrick's Notice of the Present State, etc. (Monthly Review for November, 1759.)*

An apology was made for this "undesigned" offence in the *Monthly Review* for June, 1762. Goldsmith had been a writer in the very *Review* in which this offensive attack upon him was permitted to appear. But he had attacked booksellers; had been indebted, and was perhaps still indebted, to Griffiths, the publisher and proprietor of the *Monthly Review*; and was, when the criticism on his "Inquiry" appeared, actually a writer for the *Critical Review*.

<sup>1</sup> Said to be Dr. Young, with whom Goldsmith might have had an opportunity of conversing while reader in the office of Richardson, the printer and novelist.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Walpole. "The severity of a poet gave Walpole very little uneasiness. A man whose schemes, like this minister's, seldom extended beyond the exigency of the year, but little regarded the contempt of posterity."—GOLDSMITH, *On Poetry a Rhapsody*, by Swift.

Wit, when neglected by the great, is generally despised by the vulgar. Those who are unacquainted with the world are apt to fancy the man of wit as leading a very agreeable life. They conclude, perhaps, that he is attended to with silent admiration, and dictates to the rest of mankind with all the eloquence of conscious superiority. Very different is his present situation. He is called an author, and all know that an author is a thing only to be laughed at. His person, not his jest, becomes the mirth of the company. At his approach, the most fat, unthinking face brightens into malicious meaning. Even aldermen laugh, and revenge on him the ridicule which was lavished on their forefathers :

“Etiam victis redit in præcordia virtus,  
Victoresque cadunt.”

It is, indeed, a reflection somewhat mortifying to the author who breaks his ranks, and singles out for public favor, to think that he must combat contempt before he can arrive at glory : that he must expect to have all the fools of society united against him before he can hope for the applause of the judicious. For this, however, he must prepare beforehand ; as those who have no idea of the difficulty of his employment will be apt to regard his inactivity as idleness ; and, not having a notion of the pangs of uncomplying thought in themselves, it is not to be expected they should have any desire of rewarding it in others.

Voltaire has finely described the hardships a man must encounter who writes for the public. I need make no apology for the length of the quotation :

“Your fate, my dear Le Fevre, is too strongly marked to permit your retiring. The bee must toil in making honey, the silk-worm must spin, the philosopher must dissect them, and you are born to sing of their labors. You must be a poet and a scholar, even though your inclinations should resist ; nature is too strong for inclination. But hope not, my friend, to find tranquillity in the employment you are going to pursue. The route of genius is not less obstructed with disappointment than that of ambition.

“If you have the misfortune not to excel in your profession as a poet, repentance must tincture all your future enjoyments; if you succeed, you make enemies. You tread a narrow path: contempt on one side, and hatred on the other, are ready to seize you upon the slightest deviation.

“But why must I be hated? you will perhaps reply; why must I be persecuted for having written a pleasing poem, for having produced an applauded tragedy, or for otherwise instructing or amusing mankind or myself?

“My dear friend, these very successes shall render you miserable for life. Let me suppose your performance has merit; let me suppose you have surmounted the teasing employments of printing and publishing; how will you be able to lull the critics, who, like Cerberus, are posted at all the avenues of literature, and who settle the merits of every new performance? How, I say, will you be able to make them open in your favor? There are always three or four literary journals in France, as many in Holland, each supporting opposite interests. The booksellers who guide these periodical compilations find their account in being severe; the authors employed by them have wretchedness to add to their natural malignity. The majority may be in your favor, but you may depend on being torn by the rest. Loaded with unmerited scurrility, perhaps you reply; they rejoin; both plead at the bar of the public, and both are condemned to ridicule.

“But if you write for the stage, your case is still more worthy compassion. You are there to be judged by men whom the custom of the times has rendered contemptible. Irritated by their own inferiority, they exert all their little tyranny upon you, revenging upon the author the insults they receive from the public. From such men, then, you are to expect your sentence. Suppose your piece admitted, acted; one single ill-natured jest from the pit is sufficient to cancel all your labors. But allowing that it succeeds. There are a hundred squibs flying all abroad to prove that it should not have succeeded. You shall find your brightest scenes burlesqued by the ignorant; and the learned, who know a little Greek, and nothing of their native language, affect to despise you.

"But perhaps, with a panting heart, you carry your piece before a woman of quality. She gives the labors of your brain to her maid to be cut into shreds for curling her hair; while the laced footman, who carries the gaudy livery of luxury, insults your appearance, who bear the livery of indigence.

"But granting your excellence has at last forced envy to confess that your works have some merit; this then is all the reward you can expect while living. However, for this tribute of applause you must expect persecution. You will be reputed the author of scandal which you have never seen, of verses you despise, and of sentiments directly contrary to your own. In short, you must embark in some one party, or all parties will be against you.

"There are among us a number of learned societies, where a lady presides, whose wit begins to twinkle when the splendor of her beauty begins to decline. One or two men of learning compose her ministers of state. These must be flattered, or made enemies by being neglected. Thus, though you had the merit of all antiquity united in your person, you grow old in misery and disgrace. Every place designed for men of letters is filled up by men of intrigue. Some nobleman's private tutor, some court flatterer, shall bear away the prize, and leave you to anguish and to disappointment."

Yet it were well if none but the dunces of society were combined to render the profession of an author ridiculous or unhappy. Men of the first eminence are often found to indulge this illiberal vein of raillery. Two contending writers often, by the opposition of their wit, render their profession contemptible in the eyes of ignorant persons, who should have been taught to admire. And yet, whatever the reader may think of himself, it is at least two to one but he is a greater blockhead than the most scribbling dunce he affects to despise.

The poet's poverty is a standing topic of contempt. His writing for bread is an unpardonable offence. Perhaps of all mankind an author in these times is used most hardly. We keep him poor, and yet revile his poverty. Like angry par-

ents who correct their children till they cry, and then correct them for crying, we reproach him for living by his wit, and yet allow him no other means to live.

His taking refuge in garrets and cellars<sup>1</sup> has of late been violently objected to him, and that by men who I dare hope are more apt to pity than insult his distress.<sup>2</sup> Is poverty the writer's fault? No doubt he knows how to prefer a bottle of champagne to the nectar of the neighboring ale-house, or a venison pasty to a plate of potatoes. Want of delicacy is not in him, but in us, who deny him the opportunity of making an elegant choice.

Wit certainly is the property of those who have it, nor should we be displeased if it is the only property a man sometimes has. We must not underrate him who uses it for subsistence, and flies from the ingratitude of the age even to a bookseller for redress. If the profession of an author is to be laughed at by the stupid, it is certainly better to be contemptibly rich than contemptibly poor. For all the wit that ever adorned the human mind will at present no more shield the author's poverty from ridicule, than his high-topped gloves conceal the unavoidable omissions of his laundress.

To be more serious, new fashions, follies, and vices make new monitors necessary in every age. An author may be considered as a merciful substitute to the legislature. He acts not by punishing crimes, but preventing them. However virtuous the present age, there may be still growing employment for ridicule or reproof, for persuasion or satire. If the author be, therefore, still so necessary among us, let us treat him with proper consideration as a child of the public, not a rent-charge on the community.<sup>3</sup> And, indeed, a child of the public he is in all respects; for while so well able to

<sup>1</sup> The first edition adds: "And living among vermin."

<sup>2</sup> "The great topic of his [Pope's] ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner."—JOHNSON'S *Life of Pope*.

<sup>3</sup> Goldsmith had Dryden's lines to Congreve in his mind:

"Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expense,  
I live a rent-charge on his providence."

direct others, how incapable is he frequently found of guiding himself! His simplicity exposes him to all the insidious approaches of cunning; his sensibility, to the slightest invasions of contempt. Though possessed of fortitude to stand unmoved the expected bursts of an earthquake, yet of feelings so exquisitely poignant as to agonize under the slightest disappointment. Broken rest, tasteless meals, and causeless anxiety shorten his life, or render it unfit for active employment; prolonged vigils and intense application still further contract his span, and make his time glide insensibly away. Let us not, then, aggravate those natural inconveniences by neglect; we have had sufficient instances of this kind already. Sale and Moore<sup>1</sup> will suffice for one age at least.<sup>2</sup> But they are dead, and their sorrows are over. The neglected author of the "Persian Eclogues,"<sup>3</sup> which, however inaccurate, excel any in our language, is still alive: happy, if *insensible* of our neglect, not *raging* at our ingratitude! It is enough that the age has already produced instances of men pressing foremost in the lists of fame, and worthy of better times; schooled by continued adversity into a hatred of their kind, flying from thought to drunkenness, yielding to the united pressure of labor, penury, and sorrow, sinking unheeded, without one friend to drop a tear on their unattended obsequies, and indebted to charity for a grave.<sup>4</sup>

The author, when unpatronized by the great, has naturally

<sup>1</sup> "Sale, *Savage, Amhurst, Moore.*"—*First Edition.* George Sale, the translator of the "Koran," and one of the authors of the "Universal History" and the "General Dictionary," died 1736. Edward Moore, author of "Fables for the Female Sex," and projector of the periodical work entitled *The World*. He died in 1757, while the last number, in which he details the imaginary death of the author, was passing through the press. Richard Savage, the poet, died in 1743, and was buried at the expense of the keeper of the jail in which he died. Nicholas Amhurst, the editor of *The Craftsman*, died in 1742, wholly neglected by the party he had served, and was buried at the expense of his printer. Their names (Sale excepted) occur again in *The Bee*, No. 8, "An Account of the Augustan Age of England."

<sup>2</sup> "It is enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley and starved Mr. Butler."—DRYDEN, *Letter to Hyde, Lord Rochester.*

<sup>3</sup> William Collins the poet. This was said in April, 1769, and on the following 12th of June Collins died—mad.

<sup>4</sup> The first edition adds: "Among the dregs of mankind."



recourse to the bookseller. There cannot perhaps be imagined a combination more prejudicial to taste than this. It is the interest of the one to allow as little for writing, and of the other to write as much as possible. Accordingly, tedious compilations and periodical magazines are the result of their joint endeavors. In these circumstances, the author bids adieu to fame; writes for bread, and for that only imagination is seldom called in. He sits down to address the venal muse with the most phlegmatic apathy; and, as we are told of the Russian, courts his mistress by falling asleep in her lap. His reputation never spreads in a wider circle than that of "the trade," who generally value him, not for the fineness of his compositions, but the quantity he works off in a given time.

A long habit of writing for bread thus turns the ambition of every author at last into avarice. He finds that he has written many years, that the public are scarcely acquainted even with his name; he despairs of applause, and turns to profit, which invites him. He finds that money procures all those advantages, that respect, and that ease which he vainly expected from fame. Thus the man who, under the protection of the great, might have done honor to humanity, when only patronized by the bookseller, becomes a thing little superior to the fellow who works at the press.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER X.<sup>2</sup>

OF THE MARKS OF LITERARY DECAY IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

THE faults already mentioned are such as learning is often found to flourish under; but there is one of a much more dangerous nature, which has begun to fix itself among us. I mean criticism; which may properly be called the natural

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition adds: "Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones."

<sup>2</sup> This is made up of Chapters VI. and XI. of the first edition.

destroyer of polite learning. We have seen that critics, or those whose only business is to write books upon other books, are always more numerous as learning is more diffused; and experience has shown that, instead of promoting its interest, which they profess to do, they generally injure it. This decay which criticism produces may be deplored, but can scarcely be remedied; as the man who writes against the critics is obliged to add himself to the number. Other depravations in the republic of letters, such as affectation in some popular writer leading others into vicious imitation; political struggles in the state; a depravity of morals among the people; ill-directed encouragement, or no encouragement from the great—these have been often found to co-operate in the decline of literature; and it has sometimes declined, as in modern Italy, without them; but an increase of criticism has always portended a decay. Of all misfortunes, therefore, in the commonwealth of letters, this of judging from rule, and not from feeling, is the most severe. At such a tribunal no work of original merit can please. Sublimity, if carried to an exalted height, approaches burlesque, and humor sinks into vulgarity. The person who cannot feel may ridicule both as such, and bring rules to corroborate his assertion. There is, in short, no excellence in writing that such judges may not place among the neighboring defects. Rules render the reader more difficult to be pleased, and abridge the author's power of pleasing.

If we turn to either country, we shall perceive evident symptoms of this natural decay beginning to appear. Upon a moderate calculation, there seems to be as many volumes of criticism published in those countries as of all other kinds of polite erudition united. Paris sends forth not less than four literary journals every month—the “*Année Littéraire*” and the “*Feuille*,” by Fréron; the “*Journal Etrangère*,” by the Chevalier d’Arc, and “*Le Mercure*,” by Marmontel. We have two literary reviews in London,<sup>1</sup> with critical newspapers and magazines without number. The compilers of these

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<sup>1</sup> The *Monthly Review*, established in 1749, and the *Critical*, in 1756.

resemble the commoners of Rome; they are all for levelling property, not by increasing their own, but by diminishing that of others. The man who has any good-nature in his disposition must, however, be somewhat displeased to see distinguished reputations often the sport of ignorance—to see by one false pleasantry the future peace of a worthy man's life disturbed, and this only because he has unsuccessfully attempted to instruct or amuse us. Though ill-nature is far from being wit, yet it is generally laughed at as such. The critic enjoys the triumph, and ascribes to his parts what is only due to his effrontery.<sup>1</sup> I fire with indignation when I see persons wholly destitute of education and genius indent to the Press, and thus turn book-makers, adding to the sin of criticism the sin of ignorance also; whose trade is a bad one, and who are bad workmen in the trade.

When I consider those industrious men as indebted to the works of others for a precarious subsistence; when I see them coming down at stated intervals to rummage the book-seller's counter for materials to work upon, it raises a smile, though mixed with pity. It reminds me of an animal called by naturalists the soldier. "This little creature," says the historian, "is passionately fond of a shell; but, not being supplied with one by nature, has recourse to the deserted shell of some other. I have seen these harmless reptiles," continues he, "come down once a year from the mountains, rank and file, cover the whole shore, and ply busily about, each in request of a shell to please it. Nothing can be more amusing than their industry upon this occasion. One shell is too big, another too little: they enter and keep possession sometimes for a good while, until one is at last found entirely to please. When all are thus properly equipped, they march up again to

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<sup>1</sup> What follows stands thus in the first edition (p. 79): "If there be any, however, among these writers, who, being bred gentlemen and scholars, are obliged to have recourse to such an employment for subsistence, I wish them one more suited to their inclinations; but for such who, wholly destitute of education and genius, indent to the Press, and turn mere book-makers, they deserve the severest censure. These add to the sin of criticism the sin of ignorance also. Their trade is a bad one, and they are bad workmen in the trade."

the mountains, and live in their new acquisition till under a necessity of changing."

There is, indeed, scarcely an error of which our present writers are guilty,<sup>1</sup> that does not arise from their opposing systems; there is scarcely an error that criticism cannot be brought to excuse. From this proceeds the affected security of our odes, the tuneless flow of our blank verse, the pompous epithet, labored diction, and every other deviation from common-sense which procures the poet the applause of the month:<sup>2</sup> he is praised by all, read by a few, and soon forgotten.

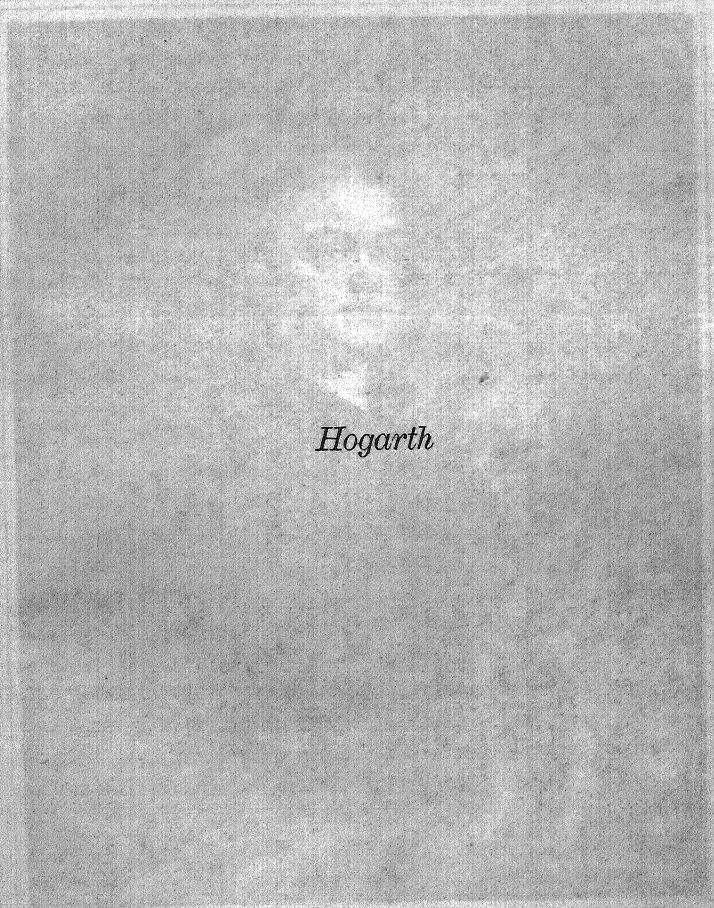
There never was an unbeaten path trodden by the poet that the critic did not endeavor to reclaim him by calling his attempt innovation. This might be instanced in Dante, who first followed nature, and was persecuted by the critics as long as he lived. Thus novelty, one of the greatest beauties in poetry, must be avoided, or the connoisseur be displeased. It is one of the chief privileges, however, of genius, to fly from the herd of imitators by some happy singularity; for should he stand still, his heavy pursuers will at length certainly come up, and fairly dispute the victory.

The ingenious Mr. Hogarth used to assert that every one except the connoisseur was a judge of painting. The same may be asserted of writing: the public in general set the whole piece in the proper point of view; the critic lays his eye close to all its minuteness, and condemns or approves in detail. And this may be the reason why so many writers at present are apt to appeal from the tribunal of criticism to that of the people.

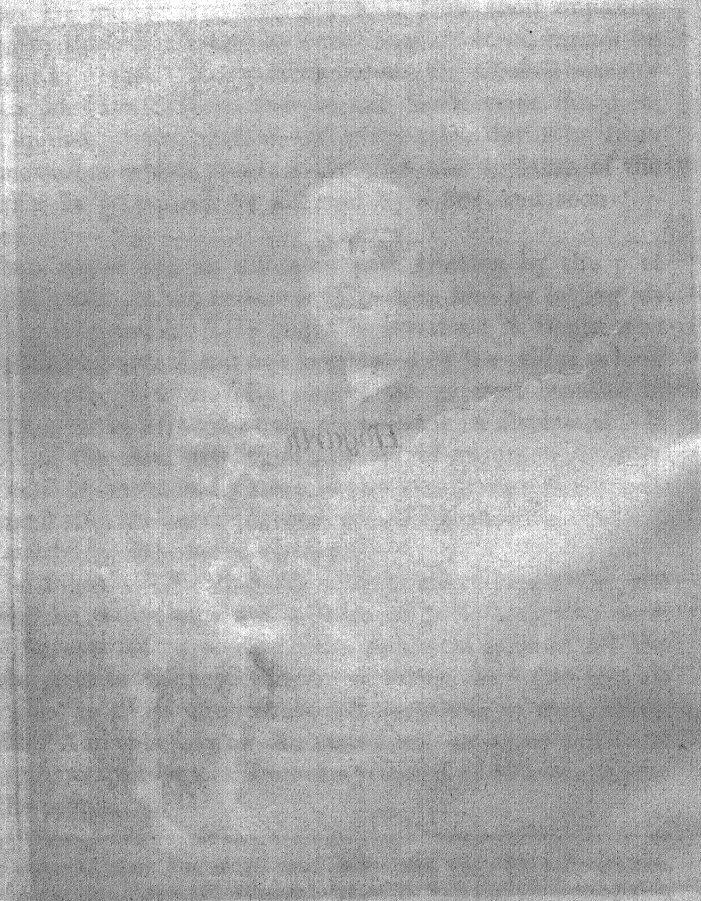
<sup>1</sup> Chapter XI. of the first edition opens thus: "But there are still some men, whom fortune has blessed with affluence, to whom the Muse pays her morning visit, not like a creditor, but a friend; to this happy few, who have leisure to polish what they write, and liberty to choose their own subjects, I would direct my advice, which consists in a few words: *write what you think, regardless of the critics.* To persuade to this was the chief design of this essay. To break, or at least to loosen those bonds, first put on by caprice, and afterward drawn hard by fashion, is my wish. I have assumed the critic only to dissuade from criticism.

"There is scarce an error of which our present writers are guilty," etc.

<sup>2</sup> "Connoisseur."—*First Edition.*



*Hogarth*







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From a desire in the critic, of grafting the spirit of ancient languages upon the English, have proceeded of late several disagreeable instances of pedantry. Among the number I think we may reckon blank verse.<sup>1</sup> Nothing but the greatest sublimity of subject can render such a measure pleasing; however, we now see it used upon the most trivial occasions. It has particularly found its way into our didactic poetry,<sup>2</sup> and is likely to bring that species of composition into disrepute, for which the English are deservedly famous.

Those who are acquainted with writing know that our language runs almost naturally into blank verse. The writers of our novels, romances, and all of this class who have no notion of style, naturally hobble into this unharmonious measure. If rhymes, therefore, be more difficult, for that very reason I would have our poets write in rhyme. Such a restriction upon the thought of a good poet often lifts and increases the vehemence of every sentiment; for fancy, like a fountain, plays highest by diminishing the aperture. But rhymes, it will be said, are a remnant of monkish stupidity, an innovation upon the poetry of the ancients. They are but indifferently acquainted with antiquity who make the assertion. Rhymes are probably of older date than either the Greek or Latin dactyl and spondee. The Celtic, which

<sup>1</sup> "Yet, however this art [poetry] may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in great danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favor of blank verse, and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests, and iambics, alliterative care, and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it: and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say; for error is ever talkative. . . ."

"What reception a poem may find which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know."—GOLDSMITH, *Dedication to The Traveller*, 1765.

<sup>2</sup> Goldsmith alludes to Akenside's "Pleasures of Imagination" (1744); Armstrong's "Art of Preserving Health" (1744); Dyer's "Fleece" (1757). "A poem frigidly didactic without rhyme is so near to prose, that the reader only scorns it for pretending to be verse."—JOHNSON'S *Life of Roscommon*. "Contending angels may shake the regions of heaven in blank verse; but the flow of equal measures, and the embellishment of rhyme, must recommend to our attention the art of ingrafting, and decide the merit of the red-streak and pearmain."—JOHNSON'S *Life of J. Philips*.

is allowed to be the first language spoken in Europe, has ever preserved them, as we may find in the Edda of Iceland, and the Irish carols, still sung among the original inhabitants of that island. Olaus Wormius gives us some of the Teutonic poetry in this way; and Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen, some of the Norwegian. In short, this jingle of sounds is almost natural to mankind, at least it is so to our language, if we may judge from many unsuccessful attempts to throw it off.

I should not have employed so much time in opposing this erroneous innovation, if it were not apt to introduce another in its train; I mean, a disgusting solemnity of manner into our poetry; and, as the prose writer has been ever found to follow the poet, it must consequently banish in both all that agreeable trifling which, if I may so express it, often deceives us into instruction.<sup>1</sup> The finest sentiment and the most weighty truth may put on a pleasant face; and it is even virtuous to jest when serious advice must be disgusting. But instead of this, the most trifling performance among us now assumes all the didactic stiffness of wisdom. The most diminutive son of fame or of famine has his *we* and his *us*, his *firstlies* and his *secondlies*, as methodical as if bound in cow-hide and closed with clasps of brass. Were these monthly reviews and magazines frothy, pert, or absurd, they might find some pardon; but to be dull and dronish is an encroachment on the prerogative of a folio. These things should be considered as pills to purge melancholy; they should be made up in our splenetic climate to be taken as physic, and not so as to be used when we take it.<sup>2</sup>

However, by the power of one single monosyllable, our critics have almost got the victory over humor among us.

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<sup>1</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Dry reasoning and dull morality have no force with the wild, fantastic libertine. He must be met with smiles, and courted with the allurements of gayety; he must be taught to believe that he is in pursuit of pleasure, and be surprised into reformation."

<sup>2</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Some such law should be enacted in the republic of letters as we find takes place in the House of Commons. As no man there can show his wisdom unless first qualified by three hundred pounds a year, so none here should possess gravity unless his work amounted to three hundred pages."

Does the poet paint the absurdities of the vulgar, then he is *low*; does he exaggerate the features of folly to render it more thoroughly ridiculous, he is then very *low*. In short, they have proscribed the comic or satirical muse from every walk but high life; which, though abounding in fools as well as the humblest station, is by no means so fruitful in absurdity. Among well-bred fools we may despise much, but have little to laugh at; nature seems to present us with a universal blank of silk, ribbons, smiles, and whispers. Absurdity is the poet's game, and good-breeding is the nice concealment of absurdities. The truth is, the critic generally mistakes humor for wit, which is a very different excellence. Wit raises human nature above its level; humor acts a contrary part, and equally depresses it. To expect exalted humor is a contradiction in terms; and the critic, by demanding an impossibility from the comic poet, has, in effect, banished new comedy from the stage. But to put the same thought in a different light.

When an unexpected similitude in two objects strikes the imagination—in other words, when a thing is wittily expressed—all our pleasure turns into admiration of the artist who had fancy enough to draw the picture. When a thing is humorously described, our burst of laughter proceeds from a very different cause; we compare the absurdity of the character represented with our own, and triumph in our conscious superiority. No natural defect can be a cause of laughter; because it is a misfortune to which ourselves are liable. A defect of this kind changes the passion into pity or horror. We only laugh at those instances of moral absurdity to which we are conscious we ourselves are not liable. For instance, should I describe a man as wanting his nose, there is no humor in this, as it is an accident to which human nature is subject, and may be any man's case; but should I represent this man without his nose as extremely curious in the choice of his snuffbox, we here see him guilty of an absurdity of which we imagine it impossible for ourselves to be guilty, and therefore applaud our own good-sense on the comparison. Thus, then, the pleasure we receive from wit turns on the admira-

tion of another; that which we feel from humor centres in the admiration of ourselves. The poet, therefore, must place the object he would have the subject of humor in a state of inferiority; in other words, the subject of humor must be low.

The solemnity worn by many of our modern writers is, I fear, often the mask of dulness; for certain it is, it seems to fit every author who pleases to put it on. By the complexion of many of our late publications one might be apt to cry out with Cicero, "*Civem, mehercule! non puto esse qui his temporibus ridere possit.*" On my conscience, I believe we have all forgot to laugh in these days. Such writers probably make no distinction between what is praised and what is pleasing; between those commendations which the reader pays his own discernment and those which are the genuine result of his sensations.

It were to be wished, therefore, that we no longer found pleasure with the inflated style<sup>1</sup> that has for some years been looked upon as fine writing, and which every young writer is now obliged to adopt, if he chooses to be read. We should now dispense with loaded epithet and dressing up trifles with dignity; for, to use an obvious instance, it is not those who make the greatest noise with their wares in the streets that have most to sell. Let us, instead of writing finely, try to write naturally; not hunt after lofty expressions to deliver mean ideas, nor be forever gaping, when we only mean to deliver a whisper.

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<sup>1</sup> In the first edition: "As our gentlemen writers have it, therefore, so much in their power to lead the taste of the times, they may now part with the inflated style," etc.

## CHAPTER XI.<sup>1</sup>

### OF THE STAGE.

OUR theatre has been generally confessed to share in this general decline, though partaking of the show and decoration of the Italian opera, with the propriety and declamation of French performance. The stage, also, is more magnificent with us than any other in Europe, and the people in general fonder of theatrical entertainment. Yet still, as our pleasures, as well as more important concerns, are generally managed by party, the stage has felt its influence. The managers, and all who espouse their side, are for decoration and ornament; the critic, and all who have studied French decorum, are for regularity and declamation. Thus it is almost impossible to please both parties; and the poet, by attempting it, finds himself often incapable of pleasing either. If he introduces stage pomp, the critic consigns his performance to the vulgar; if he indulges in recital and simplicity, it is accused of insipidity, or dry affectation.

From the nature, therefore, of our theatre, and the genius of our country, it is extremely difficult for a dramatic poet to please his audience. But happy would he be were these the only difficulties he had to encounter: there are many other more dangerous combinations against the little wit of the age. Our poet's performance must undergo a process truly chemical, before it is presented to the public. It must be tried in the manager's fire, strained through a licenser,<sup>1</sup> suffer from re-

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<sup>1</sup> "And purified in the review or the newspaper of the day. At the rate, before it can come to a private table it may probably be a mere *caput mortuum*, and only proper entertainment for the licenser, manager, or critic himself. But it may be answered, that we have a sufficient number of plays upon our theatres already, and, therefore, there is no need of new ones. But are they sufficiently good? And is the credit of our age nothing? Must our present times pass away unnoticed by posterity? We are desirous of leaving them liberty, wealth, and titles, and we can have no recompense but their applause. The title of 'learned' given

peated corrections, till it may be a mere *caput mortuum* when it arrives before the public.

The success, however, of pieces upon the stage would be of little moment, did it not influence the success of the same piece in the closet. Nay, I think it would be more for the interests of virtue, if stage performances were read, not acted; made rather our companions in the cabinet<sup>1</sup> than on the theatre. While we are readers, every moral sentiment strikes us in all its beauty, but the love scenes are frigid, tawdry, and disgusting. When we are spectators, all the persuasives to vice receive an additional lustre. The love scene is aggravated, the obscenity heightened; the best actors figure in the most debauched characters, while the parts of morality, as they are called, are thrown to some mouthing machine, who puts even virtue out of countenance by his wretched imitation.<sup>2</sup>

to an age is the most glorious applause, and shall this be disregarded? Our reputation among foreigners will quickly be discontinued when we discontinue our efforts to deserve it, and shall we despise their praise? Are our new absurdities, with which no nation more abounds, to be left unnoticed? Is the pleasure such performances give upon the perusal to be entirely given up? If these are all matters of indifference, it then signifies nothing, whether we are to be entertained with the actor or the poet, with fine sentiments, or painted canvas, or whether the dancer, or the carpenter, be constituted master of the ceremonies.

"But they are not matters of indifference. Every age produces new follies and new vices, and one absurdity is often displaced in order to make room for another. The dramatic poet, however, who should be, and has often been, a firm champion in the cause of virtue, detects all the new machinations of vice, levels his satire at the rising structures of folly, or drives her from behind the retrenchments of fashion. Thus far, then, the poet is useful; but how far the actor, that dear favorite of the public, may be so, is a question next to be determined.

"As the poet's merit is often not sufficient to introduce his performance among the public with proper dignity, he is often obliged to call in the assistance of decoration and dress to contribute to this effect. By this means a performance which pleases on the stage often instructs in the closet, and for one who has seen it acted hundreds will be readers. The actor, then, is useful, by introducing the works of the poet to the public with becoming splendor; but when these have once become popular, I must confess myself so much a sceptic as to think it would be more for the interests of virtue," etc.—*First Edition*.

<sup>1</sup> "Closet."—*First Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> Here the first edition adds: "The principal performers find their interest in choosing such parts as tend to promote, not the benefit of society, but their own

But whatever be the incentives to vice which are found at the theatre, public pleasures are generally less guilty than solitary ones. To make our solitary satisfaction truly innocent, the actor is useful, as by his means the poet's work makes its way from the stage to the closet; for all must allow that the reader receives more benefit by perusing a well-written play than by seeing it acted.<sup>1</sup>

But how is this rule inverted on our theatres at present! Old pieces are revived, and scarcely any new ones admitted. The actor is ever in our eye, and the poet seldom permitted to appear; the public are again obliged to ruminate over those hashes of absurdity, which were disgusting to our ancestors even in an age of ignorance; and the stage, instead of serving the people, is made subservient to the interests of avarice.<sup>2</sup>

We seem to be pretty much in the situation of travellers at a Scotch inn; vile entertainment is served up, complained of, and sent down; up comes worse, and that also is changed; and every change makes our wretched cheer more unsavory. What must be done? only sit down contented, cry up all that

reputation; and in using arts which inspire emotions very different from those of morality. How many young men go to the playhouse speculatively in love with the rule of right, but return home actually enamored of an actress. I have often attended to the reflections of the company upon leaving the theatre; one actor had the finest pipe, but the other the most melodious voice; one was a bewitching creature, another a charming devil; and such are generally our acquisitions at the playhouse: it brings to my remembrance an old lady, who, being passionately fond of a famous preacher, went every Sunday to church, but, struck only with his graceful manner of delivery, disregarded and forgot the truths of his discourse."

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition: "But it is needless to mention the incentives to vice which are to be found at the theatre, or the immorality of some of the performers. Such impeachments, though true, would be regarded as cant, while their exhibitions continue to amuse. I would only infer from hence that an actor is chiefly useful in introducing new performances upon the stage, since the reader receives more benefit by perusing a well-written play in his closet than by seeing it acted. I would also infer that to the poet is to be ascribed all the good that attends seeing plays, and to the actor all the harm."

<sup>2</sup> The first edition adds: "We must now see the literary honors of our country suppressed that an actor may dine with elegance; we must tamely sit and see the celestial Muse made a slave to the histrionic Demon."

comes before us, and admire even the absurdities of Shakspeare.

Let the reader suspend his censure. I admire the beauties of this great father of our stage as much as they deserve, but could wish, for the honor of our country, and for his honor too, that many of his scenes were forgotten. A man blind of one eye should always be painted in profile. Let the spectator who assists at any of these newly-revived pieces only ask himself whether he would approve such a performance if written by a modern poet? I fear he will find that much of his applause proceeds merely from the sound of a name, and an empty veneration for antiquity. In fact, the revival of those pieces of forced humor, far-fetched conceit, and unnatural hyperbole, which have been ascribed to Shakspeare, is rather gibbeting than raising a statue to his memory; it is rather a trick of the actor, who thinks it safest acting in exaggerated characters, and who, by outstepping nature, chooses to exhibit the ridiculous *outré* of a harlequin under the sanction of that venerable name.

What strange vamped comedies, farcical tragedies, or what shall I call them, speaking pantomimes, have we not of late seen! No matter what the play may be, it is the actor who draws an audience. He throws life into all; all are in spirits and merry, in at one door and out at another; the spectator, in a fool's paradise, knows not what all this means, till the last act concludes in matrimony. The piece pleases our critics, because it talks old English; and it pleases the galleries, because it has ribaldry. True taste, or even common-sense, are out of the question.

But great art must be sometimes used before they can thus impose upon the public. To this purpose, a prologue written with some spirit generally precedes the piece, to inform us that it was composed by Shakspeare, or old Ben, or somebody else who took them for his model. A face of iron could not have the assurance to avow dislike; the theatre has its partisans who understand the force of combinations, trained up to vociferation, clapping of hands, and clattering of sticks; and though a man might have strength sufficient to overcome



a lion in single combat, he may run the risk of being devoured by an army of *ants*.<sup>1</sup>

I am not insensible that *third nights*<sup>2</sup> are disagreeable drawbacks upon the annual profits of the stage. I am confident it is much more to the manager's advantage to furbish up all the lumber which the good-sense of our ancestors, but for his care, had consigned to oblivion. It is not with him, therefore, but with the public I would expostulate; they have a right to demand respect, and surely those newly-revived plays are no instances of the manager's deference.

I have been informed that no new play can be admitted upon our theatres unless the author chooses to wait some years, or, to use the phrase in fashion, till it comes to be played in turn.<sup>3</sup> A poet thus can never expect to contract a fa-

<sup>1</sup> The first edition reads: "An army even of mice; he may run the risk of being eaten up, marrow-bones and all."

<sup>2</sup> Third nights were given to the author after the expenses of the house for the night were paid. Thus we read in Pope of "*thin* third nights," and "*warm* third nights." Some successful poets with successful plays enjoyed a sixth and even a ninth night. The poet's third night was, like the actor's annual benefit night, his principal produce from the stage. Managers generally looked coldly upon *third nights*, though they liked the run of a new piece.

<sup>3</sup> "The first knowledge Mr. Garrick had of his [Goldsmith's] abilities was from an attack upon him by Goldsmith, when he was but a very young author, in a book called 'The Present State of Learning.' Among other abuses (for the Doctor loved to dwell upon grievances) he took notice of the behavior of managers to authors; this must surely have proceeded from the most generous principles of reforming what was amiss for the benefit of others, for the Doctor at that time had not the most distant views of commencing dramatic author.

"Little did Goldsmith imagine he should one day be obliged to ask a favor from the director of a playhouse; however, when the office of Secretary to the Society of Arts became vacant, the Doctor was persuaded to offer himself a candidate. He was told that Mr. Garrick was a leading member of that learned body, and his interest and recommendation would be of consequence to enforce his pretensions.

"He waited upon the manager, and, in few words, requested his vote and interest. Mr. Garrick could not avoid observing to him that it was impossible he could lay claim to any recommendation from him, as he had taken pains to deprive himself of his assistance by an unprovoked attack upon his management of the theatre, in his 'State of Learning.' Goldsmith, instead of making an apology for his conduct, either from misinformation or misconception, bluntly replied, 'In truth he had spoken his mind, and believed what he said was very right.' The manager dismissed him with civility; and Goldsmith lost the office by a very great majority, who voted in favor of Dr. Templeman."—DAVIES's *Life of Garrick*, ii. 143. Ed. 1780.

miliarity with the stage, by which alone he can hope to succeed; nor can the most signal success relieve immediate want. Our Saxon ancestors had but one name for a wit and a witch. I will not dispute the propriety of uniting those characters then; but the man who, under the present discouragements, ventures to write for the stage, whatever claim he may have to the appellation of a wit, at least he has no right to be called a conjurer.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Here the first edition adds: "Yet getting a play on, even in three or four years, is a privilege reserved only for the happy few who have the arts of courting the manager as well as the muse; who have adulation to please his vanity, powerful patrons to support their merit, or money to indemnify disappointment. The poet must act like our beggars at Christmas, who lay the first shilling on the plate for themselves. Thus all wit is banished from the stage, except it be supported by friends or fortune; and poets are seldom overburdened with either.

"I am not at present writing for a party, but above theatrical connections in every sense of the expression; I have no particular spleen against the fellow who sweeps the stage with the besom, or the hero who brushes it with his train. It were a matter of indifference to me, whether our heroines are in keeping, or our candle-snuffers burn their fingers, did not such make a great part of public care and polite conversation. It is not these, but the age I would reproach; the vile complexion of the times, when those employ our most serious thoughts, and separate us into parties, whose business is only to amuse our idlest hours. I cannot help reproaching our meanness in this respect; for our stupidity and our folly will be remembered, when even the attitudes and eyebrows of a favorite actor shall be forgotten.

"In the times of Addison and Steele, players were held in greater contempt than, perhaps, they deserved. Honest Estcourt, Verbruggen, and Underhill were extremely poor, and assumed no airs of insolence. They were contented with being merry at a city feast, with promoting the mirth of a set of cheerful companions, and gave their jest for their reckoning. At that time it was kind to say something in defence of the poor, good-natured creatures, if it were only to keep them in good-humor; but at present such encouragements are unnecessary. Our actors assume all that state off the stage which they do on it; and, to use an expression borrowed from the greenroom, every one is *up* in his part. I am sorry to say it, they seem to forget their real characters; more provoking still, the public seems to forget them too.

"Macrobius has preserved a prologue spoken and written by the poet Laberius, a Roman knight, whom Cæsar forced upon the stage, written with great elegance and spirit, which shows what opinion the Romans in general entertained of the profession of an actor:

"*'Necessitas cujus cursus transversi impetum,' etc.*"

Here followed the prologue printed in Vol. I. p. 105.

From all that has been said upon the state of our theatre, we may easily foresee whether it is likely to improve or decline; and whether the free-born muse can bear to submit to those restrictions which avarice or power would impose. For the future it is somewhat unlikely that he whose labors are valuable, or who knows their value, will turn to the stage for either fame or subsistence, when he must at once flatter an actor and please an audience.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XII.

### ON UNIVERSITIES.

INSTEAD of losing myself in a subject of such extent, I shall only offer a few thoughts as they occur, and leave their connection to the reader.

We seem divided, whether an education formed by travelling or by a sedentary life be preferable. We see more of the world by travel, but more of human nature by remaining at home; as in an infirmary, the student who only attends to the disorders of a few patients is more likely to understand his profession than he who indiscriminately examines them all.

A youth just landed at the Brille resembles a clown at a puppet-show; carries his amazement from one miracle to another; from this cabinet of curiosities to that collection of pictures; but wondering is not the way to grow wise.

Whatever resolutions we set ourselves not to keep company with our countrymen abroad, we shall find them broken when

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition adds: "Let no manager impute this to spleen or disappointment. I only assert the claims of the public, and endeavor to vindicate a profession which has hitherto wanted a defender. A mean or mercenary conduct may continue for some time to triumph over opposition, but it is possible the public will at last be taught to vindicate their privileges. Perhaps there may come a time when the poet will be at liberty to increase the entertainments of the people; but such a period may possibly not arise till our discouragements have banished poetry from the stage."

once we leave home. Among strangers we consider ourselves as in a solitude, and it is but natural to desire society.

In all the great towns of Europe there are to be found Englishmen residing either from interest or choice. These generally lead a life of continued debauchery. Such are the countrymen a traveller is likely to meet with.

This may be the reason why Englishmen are all thought to be mad or melancholy by the vulgar abroad. Their money is giddily and merrily spent among sharpers of their own country; and when that is gone, of all nations the English bear worst that disorder called the *maladie de poche*.

Countries wear very different appearances to travellers of different circumstances. A man who is whirled through Europe in a post-chaise, and the pilgrim who walks the grand tour on foot, will form very different conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

To see Europe with advantage, a man should appear in various circumstances of fortune; but the experiment would be too dangerous for young men.

There are many things relative to other countries which can be learned to more advantage at home; their laws and policies are among the number.

The greatest advantages which result to youth from travel, are an easy address, the shaking off national prejudices, and the finding nothing ridiculous in national peculiarities.

The time spent in these acquisitions could have been more usefully employed at home. An education in a college seems therefore preferable.<sup>2</sup>

We attribute to universities either too much or too little. Some assert that they are the only proper places to advance learning; while others deny even their utility in forming an education. Both are erroneous.

Learning is most advanced in popular cities, where chance often conspires with industry to promote it; where the mem-

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<sup>1</sup> "Haud inexpertus loquor."—*First Edition*.

<sup>2</sup> The first edition adds: "It has lately been disputed whether the arts and sciences do most benefit or injury to mankind. Mere speculative trifling! Ask the housebreaker or highwayman in what university they were bred. They will answer—in none."

bers of this large university, if I may so call it, catch manners as they rise, study life not logic, and have the world for correspondents.

The greatest number of universities have ever been founded in times of the greatest ignorance.

New improvements in learning are seldom adopted in colleges until admitted everywhere else. And this is right; we should always be cautious of teaching the rising generation uncertainties for truth. Thus, though the professors in universities have been too frequently found to oppose the advancement of learning, yet when once established, they are the properest persons to diffuse it.<sup>1</sup>

There is more knowledge to be acquired from one page of the volume of mankind, if the scholar only knows how to read, than in volumes of antiquity. We grow learned, not wise, by too long a continuance at college.

This points out the time in which we should leave the university. Perhaps the age of twenty-one, when at our universities the first degree is generally taken, is the proper period.

The universities of Europe may be divided into three classes. Those upon the old scholastic establishment, where the pupils are immured, talk nothing but Latin, and support every day syllogistical disputations in school philosophy. Would not one be apt to imagine this was the proper education to make a man a fool? Such are the universities of Prague, Louvain, and Padua. The second is where the pupils are under few restrictions, where all scholastic jargon is banished, where they take a degree when they think proper, and live not in the college but the city. Such are Edinburgh, Leyden, Göttingen, Geneva. The third is a mixture of the two former, where the pupils are restrained, but not confined; where many, though not all, of the absurdities of scholastic philosophy are suppressed, and where the first degree is taken after four years' matriculation. Such are Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin.

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition adds: "The rudiments of learning are best implanted in a college, the cultivation of it is best promoted in the world."

As for the first class, their absurdities are too apparent to admit of a parallel. It is disputed which of the two last are more conducive to national improvement.

Skill in the professions is acquired more by practice than study; two or three years may be sufficient for learning their rudiments. The universities of Edinburgh, etc., grant a license for practising them when the student thinks proper, which our universities refuse till after a residence of several years.

The dignity of the professions may be supported by this dilatory proceeding; but many men of learning are thus too long excluded from the lucrative advantages which superior skill has a right to expect.

Those universities must certainly be most frequented which promise to give in two years the advantages which others will not under twelve.

The man who has studied a profession for three years, and practised it for nine more, will certainly know more of his business than he who has only studied it for twelve.

The universities of Edinburgh, etc., must certainly be most proper for the study of those professions in which men choose to turn their learning to profit as soon as possible.

The universities of Oxford, etc., are improper for this, since they keep the student from the world, which, after a certain time, is the only true school of improvement.

When a degree in the professions can be taken only by men of independent fortunes, the number of candidates in learning is lessened, and consequently the advancement of learning retarded.

This slowness of conferring degrees is a remnant of scholastic barbarity. Paris, Louvain, and those universities which still retain their ancient institutions, confer the doctor's degree slower even than we.

The statutes of every university should be considered as adapted to the laws of its respective government. Those should alter as these happen to fluctuate.

Four years spent in the arts (as they are called in colleges), is perhaps laying too laborious a foundation. Entering a

profession without any previous acquisitions of this kind, is building too bold a superstructure.

Teaching by lecture, as at Edinburgh, may make men scholars, if they think proper; but instructing by examination, as at Oxford, will make them so, often against their inclination.

Edinburgh only disposes the student to receive learning; Oxford often makes him actually learned.

In a word, were I poor, I should send my son to Leyden or Edinburgh, though the annual expense in each, particularly in the first, is very great. Were I rich, I would send him to one of our own universities. By an education received in the first, he has the best likelihood of living; by that received in the latter, he has the best chance of becoming great.

We have of late heard much of the necessity of studying oratory. Vespasian was the first who paid professors of rhetoric for publicly instructing youth at Rome. However, those pedants never made an orator.

The best orations that ever were spoken were pronounced in the parliaments of King Charles the First. These men never studied the rules of oratory.

Mathematics are, perhaps, too much studied at our universities. This seems a science to which the meanest intellects are equal. I forget who it is that says, "All men might understand mathematics if they would."

The most methodical manner of lecturing, whether on morals or nature, is first rationally to explain, and then produce the experiment. The most instructive method is to show the experiment first; curiosity is then excited, and attention awakened to every subsequent deduction. Hence it is evident that, in a well-formed education, a course of history should ever precede a course of ethics.

The sons of our nobility are permitted to enjoy greater liberties in our universities than those of private men. I should blush to ask the men of learning and virtue who preside in our seminaries the reason of such a prejudicial distinction. Our youth should there be inspired with a love of philosophy; and the first maxim among philosophers is—that merit only makes distinction.

Whence has proceeded the vain magnificence of expensive architecture in our colleges? Is it that men study to more advantage in a palace than in a cell? One single performance of taste or genius confers more real honors on its parent university than all the labors of the chisel.

Surely pride itself has dictated to the fellows of our colleges the absurd passion of being attended at meals, and on other public occasions, by those poor men who, willing to be scholars, come in upon some charitable foundation. It implies a contradiction, for men to be at once learning the *liberal* arts, and at the same time treated as *slaves*; at once studying freedom, and practising servitude.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE CONCLUSION.

EVERY subject acquires an adventitious importance to him who considers it with application. He finds it more closely connected with human happiness than the rest of mankind are apt to allow; he sees consequences resulting from it which do not strike others with equal conviction; and still pursuing speculation beyond the bounds of reason, too frequently becomes ridiculously earnest in trifles or absurdity.

It will, perhaps, be incurring this imputation to deduce a universal degeneracy of manners from so slight an origin as the depravation of taste—to assert that, as a nation grows dull, it sinks into debauchery. Yet such probably may be the consequence of literary decay; or, not to stretch the thought beyond what it will bear, vice and stupidity are always mutually productive of each other.

Life, at the greatest and best, has been compared to a forward child, that must be humored and played with till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over. Our few years are labored away in varying its pleasures; new amusements are pursued with studious attention; the most childish vanities



are dignified with titles of importance; and the proudest boast of the most aspiring philosopher is no more than that he provides his little playfellows the greatest pastime with the greatest innocence.

Thus the mind, ever wandering after amusement, when abridged of happiness on one part, endeavors to find it on another; when intellectual pleasures are disagreeable, those of sense will take the lead. The man who in this age is enamored of the tranquil joys of study and retirement, may in the next, should learning be fashionable no longer, feel an ambition of being foremost at a horse-course; or, if such could be the absurdity of the times, of being himself a jockey. Reason and appetite are, therefore, masters of our revels in turn; and, as we incline to the one or pursue the other, we rival angels or imitate the brutes. In the pursuit of intellectual pleasure lies every virtue; of sensual, every vice.

It is this difference of pursuit which marks the morals and characters of mankind; which lays the line between the enlightened philosopher and the half-taught citizen; between the civil citizen and illiterate peasant; between the law-obeying peasant and the wandering savage of Africa, an animal less mischievous, indeed, than the tiger, because endued with fewer powers of doing mischief. The man, the nation, must therefore be good, whose chiefest luxuries consist in the refinement of reason; and reason can never be universally cultivated unless guided by taste, which may be considered as the link between science and common-sense, the medium through which learning should ever be seen by society.

Taste will, therefore, often be a proper standard, when others fail, to judge of a nation's improvement or degeneracy in morals. We have often no permanent characteristics by which to compare the virtues or the vices of our ancestors with our own. A generation may rise and pass away without leaving any traces of what it really was; and all complaints of our deterioration may be only topics of declamation or the cavillings of disappointment; but in taste we have standing evidence; we can with precision compare the literary performances of our fathers with our own, and from

their excellence or defects determine the moral, as well as the literary, merits of either.

If, then, there ever comes a time when taste is so far depraved among us, that critics shall load every work of genius with unnecessary comment, and quarter their empty performances with the substantial merits of an author, both for subsistence and applause; if there comes a time when censure shall speak in storms, but praise be whispered in the breeze, while real excellence often finds shipwreck in either; if there be a time when the muse shall seldom be heard, except in plaintive elegy, as if she wept her own decline, while lazy compilations supply the place of original thinking; should there ever be such a time, may succeeding critics, both for the honor of our morals as well as our learning, say that such a period bears no resemblance to the present age!

## APPENDIX.

### THE POLITE LEARNING OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE INCAPABLE OF COMPARISON.<sup>1</sup>

WHATEVER preference the vulgar of every nation may think due to their own in particular, the learned, who look beyond the bounds of national prejudice and are citizens of the world, seem unanimous in regarding the English and French as the principal literary supporters of the present age. Their emulation in learning, as well as in power, have divided the wits not less than the armies of Europe. "A niuno è nascosto," says a modern writer, "come la Francia e l'Inghilterra sono rivali nella politica, nel commercio, nella gloria delle arme delle lettere."

This acknowledged superiority was, however, no easy conquest over that national pride with which every country is more or less tinctured. Every part of Europe was at one time or another candidates for this pre-eminence, which though they had not the good fortune to obtain, their attempts served in a subordinate degree to assist and refine the taste of their contemporaries. Thus Spain exhibited fine examples of humor; Italy of delicacy; and Holland of freedom in inquiry. But to blend these excellences, and arrive at perfection, seemed reserved for the poets and philosophers of England and France in the illustrious reigns of Queen Anne and Louis XIV. The writers of that period not only did honor to their respective countries, but even to human nature. Like stars lost in each other's brightness, though no single writer attracts our attention alone, yet their conjunction diffuses such brightness upon the age as will give the minutest actions of those two reigns an importance which the revolutions of empire will want that were transacted in greater obscurity.

Yet that excellence which now excites the admiration of Europe served, at that period of which I am speaking, only to promote envy in the respective writers of those two countries. They both took every method to depreciate the merit of each other; the French sel-

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter VII. of the first edition; omitted in the second. See p. 38.

dom mentioned the English but with disrespect, put themselves foremost in every literary contest, and, to leave the English no color of competition, placed the Italians in the second rank. The English, on the other hand, regarded the French as triflers, accused the flimsy texture of their style, and the false brilliancy of their sentiments. Yet, while each thus loaded the other with contempt, it seemed as if done with a view of having their mutual plagiarism pass with less suspicion. In works of entertainment, we borrowed from the French unsparingly; and they plundered our serious performances with as little compunction. Europe, however, regarded the contest with impartiality, and the debate seemed at last determined. Their writings are allowed to have more taste, ours more truth. We are allowed the honor of striking out sentiments, they of dressing them in the most pleasing form. If we have produced reasoners who have refined mankind, it is by means of French translations and abstracts that they are generally known in Europe. Their language has prevailed, and our philosophy.

And this, indeed, is all the English had a right to expect in a contest of this nature, nor have they any just reason to regret not being chosen supreme in taste as well as truth; for if we only consider how different our manners are from those of every other nation on the Continent; how little we are visited by travellers of discernment; how ignorant our neighbors are of our various absurdities and humors; if we consider this, it cannot be expected that our works of taste, which imitate our peculiar manners, can please those that are unacquainted with the originals themselves. Though our descriptions and characters are drawn from nature, yet they may appear exaggerated, or faintly copied, to those who, unacquainted with the peculiarities of our island, have no standard by which to make the comparison.

The French are much more fortunate than we in this particular. A universal sameness of character appears to spread itself over the whole Continent; particularly, the fools and coxcombs of every country abroad seem almost cast in the same mould. The battered beau, who affects the boy at threescore, or the *petit-maitre*, who would be a man at fifteen, are characters which may be seen at every coffee-house out of England. The French pictures, therefore, of life and manners are immediately allowed to be just, because foreigners are acquainted with the models from whence they are copied. The Marquis of Molière strikes all Europe. Sir John Falstaff, with all the merry men of Eastcheap, are entirely of England, and please the English alone.

Let us, then, be satisfied the world has allowed us superiority in the strength and justness of our sentiments, for it hath truth as a standard by which to compare them; we are placed inferior in regard to taste, for in this there is no standard to judge of our desert, our manners being unknown. Truth is a positive, taste a relative excellence. We may justly appeal from the sentence of our judges; though we must do them the justice to own that their verdict has been impartial.

But it may be objected that this is setting up a particular standard of taste in every country; this is removing that universal one which has hitherto united the armies and enforced the commands of criticism; by this reasoning the critics of one country will not be proper guides to the writers of another; Grecian or Roman rules will not be generally binding in France or England; but the laws designed to improve our taste, by this reasoning, must be adapted to the genius of every people, as much as those enacted to promote morality.

What I propose as objections are really the sentiments I mean to prove, not to obviate. I must own it as my opinion, that if criticism be at all requisite to promote the interests of learning, its rules should be taken from among the inhabitants, and adapted to the genius and temper of the country it attempts to refine. I must own it, though, perhaps, by this opinion's prevailing, many a scholium of the ancients and many a folio of criticism translated from the French, now in repute among us, would infallibly sink into oblivion. English taste, like English liberty, should be restrained only by laws of its own promoting.

But to use argument as well as assertion, let us take a nearer view of what is called taste, examine its standard, see if foreign critics are just in setting up theirs as a model to us, or whether we be right in adopting their proffered improvements. As the disquisition, however, is dry, I shall study conciseness.

All objects affect us with pleasure one of these two ways, either by immediately gratifying the senses with pleasing sensations, or by being thought in a secondary manner capable of making other objects contribute to this effect. The pleasures of immediate sensation are coeval with our senses, and, perhaps, most vivid in infancy; the secondary source of pleasure results from experience only, from considering the analogy of nature, or the capacity a part has to unite to a whole. The pleasures of the first sort are derived from the beauty of the object; those of the second from a consideration of its use. The first are natural; no art can increase them without mending the organ

which was to give them admission. The second are artificial, and continually altering, as whim, climate, or seasons direct. To illustrate my meaning. The beauty of a guinea, for instance, its regular figure and shining color, are equally obvious to the senses in every country and climate; these qualities please the wildest savage as much as the most polished European: as far as it affects the senses, the pleasure a guinea gives is, therefore, in every country the same.

But the consideration of the uses it can be turned to is another source of pleasure, which is different in different countries. A native of Madagascar prefers to it a glass bead; a native of Holland prefers it to everything else. The pleasure, then, of its sensible qualities are everywhere the same; those of its secondary qualities everywhere different. He whom nature has furnished with the most vivid perceptions of beauty, and to whom experience has suggested the greatest number of uses, in the contemplation of any object, may be said to receive the greatest pleasure that object is capable of affording. Thus the barbarian finds some small pleasure in the contemplation of a guinea; the enlightened European, who is acquainted with its uses, still more than him; the chemist, who, besides this, knows the peculiar fixedness and malleability of the metal, most of all. This capacity of receiving pleasure may be called Taste in the objects of nature. The polite arts, in all their variety, are only an imitation of nature. He, then, must excel in them who is capable of inspiring us at once with the most vivid perceptions of beauty, and with the greatest number of experimental uses in any object described. But as the artist, to give vivid perceptions, must be perspicuous and concise, and yet to exhibit usefulness requires minuteness; here are two opposite qualities required in the writer—in one of which his imagination, in the other his reasoning faculty, is every moment liable to offend; what has he in this case to guide him? Taste is, perhaps, his only director. *Taste in writing is the exhibition of the greatest quantity of beauty and of use that may be admitted into any description without counteracting each other.*

The perfection of taste, therefore, proceeds from a knowledge of what is beautiful and useful. Criticism professes to increase our taste. But our taste cannot be increased with regard to beauty; because, as has been shown, our perceptions of this kind cannot be increased, but are most vivid in infancy. Criticism, then, can only improve our taste in the useful. But this, as was observed, is different in every climate and country—what is useful in one climate being

often noxious in another; therefore, criticism must understand the nature of the climate and country, etc., before it gives rules to direct taste. In other words, every country should have a national system of criticism.

In fact, nothing can be more absurd than rules to direct the taste of one country drawn from the manners of another. There may be some general marks in nature by which all writers are to proceed; these, however, are obvious, and might as well have never been pointed out; but to trace the sources of our passions, to mark the evanescent boundaries between satiety and disgust, and how far elegance differs from finery, requires a thorough knowledge of the people to whom the criticism is directed.

If, for instance, the English be a people who look upon death as an incident no way terrible, but sometimes fly to it for refuge from the calamities of life, why should a Frenchman be disgusted at our bloody stage? There is nothing hideous in the representation to one of us, whatever there might be to him.

We have long been characterized as a nation of spleen, and our rivals on the Continent as a land of levity. Ought they to be offended at the melancholy air which many of our modern poets assume, or ought we to be displeased with them for all their harmless trifling upon pin-cushions, parrots, and pretty faces? What is rational with us becomes with them formality; and what is fancy at Paris is at London fantastical. Critics should, therefore, imitate physicians, and consider every country as having a peculiar constitution, and consequently requiring a peculiar regimen.





# THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD;

OR,

LETTERS FROM A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER RESIDING IN LONDON TO  
HIS FRIENDS IN THE EAST.

London :

Printed for J. Newbery, at the Bible and Sun,  
in St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXII.<sup>1</sup>

[4 vols. 12°.]

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<sup>1</sup> Copies of this edition exist with a different title-page to each volume ; viz.—

London :

Printed for the Author ;

and

Sold by J. Newbery and W. Bristow, in St.  
Paul's Church-yard ; J. Leake and W. Frederick  
at Bath ; B. Collins at Salisbury ; and A. M. Smart & Co.  
at Reading.

MDCCLXXII.

In every other respect the editions are identically the same. The first edition of  
"The Vicar of Wakefield" was printed in 1766, for B. Collins, at Salisbury.

These letters (one hundred and twenty-three in number) were written for *The Public Ledger*, a London newspaper so called, started by John Newbery, a publisher, bookseller, and seller of medicines, living at the sign of "The Bible and Sun," afterwards known as No. 65, St. Paul's Church-yard. The first number of *The Public Ledger* appeared on the 12th of January, 1760; and the first letter of "The Citizen of the World" on the 24th of the same month.

Goldsmith's remuneration appears to have been at the rate of a *guinea* a Letter (Prior, i. 356).

The celebrated "Turkish Spy," the once celebrated "Persian Tales" ("turned" by Ambrose Philips), De Foe's "Tour through England" (written as a foreigner), and Walpole's Letter "from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi, at Peking," 1757, fol., had prepared the public for the ready reception of the "Chinese Letters." They were at once popular; and between the period of their publication in the columns of a newspaper and the year of Goldsmith's death, 1760-1774, went through three separate editions. The vagaries of Sir William Chambers, the architect (admirably ridiculed by Mason), added to their temporary popularity; but their present reputation rests entirely on their own excellences, independent of any other assistance.

I may add that Goldsmith remembered a quotation from Voltaire made by himself in *The Monthly Review* for August, 1757:—"The success of the 'Persian Letters' arose from the delicacy of their satire. The satire which, in the mouth of an Asiatic, is poignant, would lose all its force when coming from an European."

The text of this reprint has been derived from a collation with the three editions which Goldsmith saw through the press, the third and last appearing in 1774, with this imprint:—"London: printed for T. Carnan and F. Newbery, junior, at Number 65 in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1774." 2 vols., 12°.

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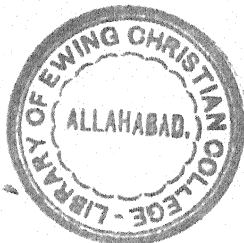
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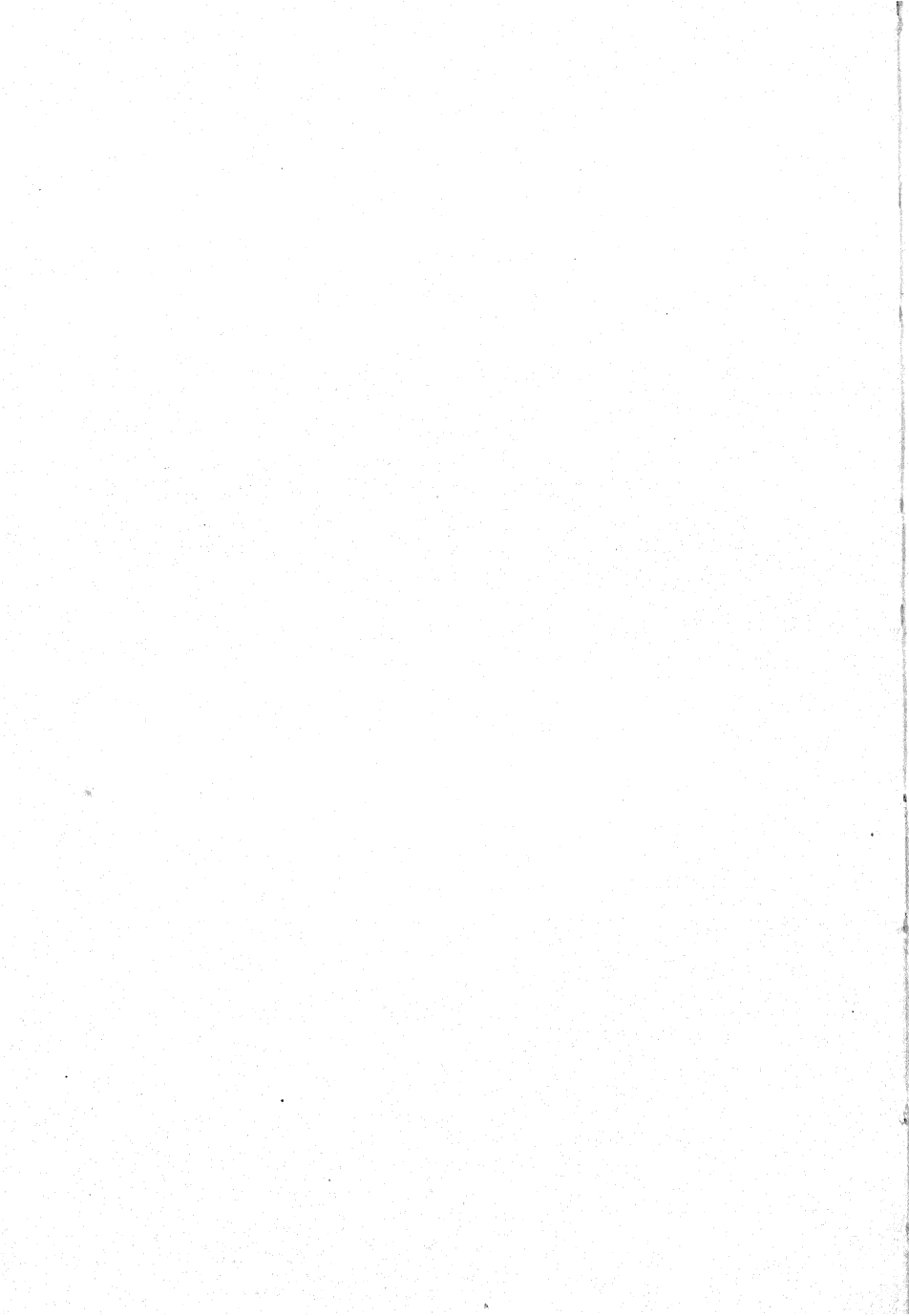
In the editions of "The Citizen of the World" published in Goldsmith's lifetime there are apparently, by the numbers, only 119 letters; but there are 123 letters in all. The error arises from three wrong numberings, viz., two of 25, two of 57, and two of 116.

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.<sup>1</sup>

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THE schoolmen had formerly a very exact way of computing the abilities of their saints or authors. Escobar,<sup>2</sup> for instance, was said to have learning as five, genius as four, and gravity as seven. Caramuel<sup>3</sup> was greater than he. His learning was as eight, his genius as six, and his gravity as thirteen. Were I to estimate the merits of our Chinese philosopher by the same scale, I would not hesitate to state his genius still higher; but as to his learning and gravity, these, I think, might safely be marked as nine hundred and ninety-nine, within one degree of absolute frigidity.

Yet, upon his first appearance here, many were angry not to find him as ignorant as a Tripoline ambassador, or an envoy from Mujac. They were surprised to find a man born so far from London, that school of prudence and wisdom, endued even with a moderate capacity. They expressed the same surprise at his knowledge that the Chinese do at ours. "How comes it," said they, "that the Europeans, so remote from China, think with so much justice and precision? They have never read our books, they scarcely know even our letters, and

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<sup>1</sup> That is, Goldsmith's.

<sup>2</sup> A famous casuist, born 1588, of a noble family of Seville, died 1669. His polemical and other writings occupy twenty-three folio volumes.

<sup>3</sup> A Cistercian monk, born at Madrid in 1606, died 1682. He wrote many works of controversial theology, and a system of divinity, in seven volumes folio.

yet they talk and reason just as we do.”<sup>1</sup> The truth is, the Chinese and we are pretty much alike. Different degrees of refinement, and not of distance, mark the distinctions among mankind. Savages of the most opposite climates have all but one character of improvidence and rapacity; and tutored nations, however separate, make use of the very same methods to procure refined enjoyment.

The distinctions of polite nations are few; but such as are peculiar to the Chinese appear in every page of the following correspondence. The metaphors and allusions are all drawn from the East. Their formality our author carefully preserves. Many of their favorite tenets in morals are illustrated. The Chinese are always concise, so is he. Simple, so is he. The Chinese are grave and sententious, so is he. But in one particular the resemblance is peculiarly striking: the Chinese are often dull, and so is he. Nor has my assistance been wanting. We are told in an old romance of a certain knight-errant and his horse who contracted an intimate friendship. The horse most usually bore the knight; but in cases of extraordinary despatch the knight returned the favor, and carried his horse. Thus in the intimacy between my author and me, he has usually given me a lift of his Eastern sublimity, and I have sometimes given him a return of my colloquial ease.

Yet it appears strange, in this season of panegyric, when scarcely an author passes unpraised either by his friends or

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<sup>1</sup> Le Comte, vol. i. p. 210.—GOLDSMITH. The author, a Jesuit of Bordeaux, was one of the six missionaries sent to China in 1685, by command of the King of France; he died in 1729. The work referred to by Goldsmith (“Nouveaux Mémoires sur la Chine”) gave great offence to the faculty of divinity at Paris, on account of the author’s prejudices in favor of the Chinese, whom he placed on a level with the Jews; and, by a decree of the parliament of Paris, passed in 1762, it was ordered to be burnt.



himself, that such merit as our philosopher's should be forgotten. While the epithets of ingenious, copious, elaborate, and refined are lavished among the mob, like medals at a coronation, the lucky prizes fall on every side, but not one on him. I could on this occasion make myself melancholy by considering the capriciousness of public taste, or the mutability of fortune; but during this fit of morality, lest my reader should sleep, I'll take a nap myself, and when I awake tell him my dream.

I imagined the Thames was frozen over, and I stood by its side. Several booths were erected upon the ice, and I was told by one of the spectators that Fashion Fair was going to begin. He added that every author who would carry his works there might probably find a very good reception. I was resolved, however, to observe the humors of the place in safety from the shore, sensible that ice was at best precarious, and having been always a little cowardly in my sleep.

Several of my acquaintance seemed much more hardy than I, and went over the ice with intrepidity. Some carried their works to the fair on sledges, some on carts, and those which were more voluminous were conveyed in wagons. Their temerity astonished me. I knew their cargoes were heavy, and expected every moment they would have gone to the bottom. They all entered the fair, however, in safety, and each soon after returned, to my great surprise, highly satisfied with his entertainment and the bargains he had brought away.

The success of such numbers at last began to operate upon me. If these, cried I, meet with favor and safety, some luck may, perhaps, for once attend the unfortunate. I am resolved to make a new adventure. The furniture, frippery, and fireworks of China have long been fashionably bought up. I'll try the fair with a small cargo of Chinese morality.

If the Chinese have contributed to vitiate our taste, I'll try how far they can help to improve our understanding. But as others have driven into the market in wagons, I'll cautiously begin by venturing with a wheelbarrow. Thus resolved, I baled up my goods and fairly ventured; when, upon just entering the fair, I fancied the ice that had supported a hundred wagons before cracked under me, and wheelbarrow and all went to the bottom.

Upon awaking from my reverie with the fright, I cannot help wishing that the pains taken in giving this correspondence an English dress had been employed in contriving new political systems, or new plots for farces. I might then have taken my station in the world, either as a poet or a philosopher, and made one in those little societies where men club to raise each other's reputation. But at present I belong to no particular class. I resemble one of those animals that has been forced from its forest to gratify human curiosity. My earliest wish was to escape unheeded through life; but I have been set up for half-pence, to fret and scamper at the end of my chain. Though none are injured by my rage, I am naturally too savage to court any friends by fawning, too obstinate to be taught new tricks, and too improvident to mind what may happen. I am appeased, though not contented. Too indolent for intrigue, and too timid to push for favor, I am—but what signifies what am I.

Ελπὶς καὶ σὺ τύχη μέγα χαίρετε· τὸν λιμὴν εὖρον.  
Οὐδὲν ἔμοι χ' ὑμῖν· παίζετε τοὺς μετ' ἑμέ.

LETTERS  
OF  
A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD.

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LETTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—A CHARACTER OF THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER.<sup>1</sup>

*To Mr. —, Merchant in London.*

Amsterdam.

SIR,—Yours of the 13th instant, covering two bills—one on Messrs. R. and D., value 478*l*. 10*s*., and the other on Mr. —, value 285*l*.—duly came to hand; the former of which met with honor, but the other has been trifled with, and I am afraid will be returned protested.

The bearer of this is my friend, therefore let him be yours. He is a native of Honan, in China, and one who did me signal services, when he was a mandarin, and I a factor at Canton. By frequently conversing with the English there, he has learned the language, though entirely a stranger to their manners and customs. I am told he is a philosopher; I am sure he is an honest man; that to you will be his best recommendation, next to the consideration of his being the friend of, sir, yours, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> The "Contents" of the several Letters were not, in Goldsmith's lifetime, prefixed to the Letters themselves, but added at the end of each volume by way of index. I have retained the useful transfer to the heading of each letter made by former editors.

## LETTER II.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHINESE IN LONDON.—HIS MOTIVES FOR THE JOURNEY.—SOME DESCRIPTION OF THE STREETS AND HOUSES.

*From Lien Chi Altangi to —, Merchant in Amsterdam.*

London.

FRIEND OF MY HEART,—May the wings of peace rest upon thy dwelling, and the shield of conscience preserve thee from vice and misery! For all thy favors accept my gratitude and esteem, the only tributes a poor philosophic wanderer can return. Sure, Fortune is resolved to make me unhappy, when she gives others a power of testifying their friendship by actions, and leaves me only words to express the sincerity of mine.

I am perfectly sensible of the delicacy with which you endeavor to lessen your own merit and my obligations. By calling your late instances of friendship only a return for former favors, you would induce me to impute to your justice what I owe to your generosity.

The services I did you at Canton, justice, humanity, and my office bade me perform; those you have done me since my arrival at Amsterdam, no laws obliged you to, no justice required; even half your favors would have been greater than my most sanguine expectations.

The sum of money, therefore, which you privately conveyed into my baggage, when I was leaving Holland, and which I was ignorant of till my arrival in London, I must beg leave to return. You have been bred a merchant, and I a scholar; you consequently love money better than I. You can find pleasure in superfluity; I am perfectly content with what is sufficient; take, therefore, what is yours; it may give you some pleasure, even though you have no occasion to use it; my happiness it cannot improve, for I have already all that I want.

My passage by sea from Rotterdam to England was more painful to me than all the journeys I ever made on land. I have traversed the immeasurable wilds of Mogul Tartary; felt all the rigors of Siberian skies; I have had my repose a hundred times disturbed by invading savages, and have seen, without shrinking, the desert sands rise like a troubled ocean all around me; against these calamities I was armed with resolution; but in my passage to England, though nothing occurred that gave the mariners any uneasiness, to one who was never at sea before, all was a subject of astonishment and terror. To find the land disappear, to see our ship mount the waves swift as an arrow from the Tartar bow, to hear the wind howling through the cordage, to feel a sickness which depresses even the spirits of the brave; these were unexpected distresses, and consequently assaulted me unprepared to receive them!

You men of Europe think nothing of a voyage by sea. With us of China, a man who has been from sight of land is regarded upon his return with admiration. I have known some provinces where there is not even a name for the ocean. What a strange people, therefore, am I got among, who have founded an empire on this unstable element, who build cities upon billows that rise higher than the mountains of Tipartala, and make the deep more formidable than the wildest tempest!

Such accounts as these, I must confess, were my first motives for seeing England. These induced me to undertake a journey of seven hundred painful days, in order to examine its opulence, buildings, sciences, arts, and manufactures on the spot. Judge, then, my disappointment on entering London to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad: wherever I turn, I am presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets, and the inhabitants; none of that beautiful gilding which makes a principal ornament in Chinese architecture.<sup>1</sup> The streets of Nankin are sometimes strewed with gold-leaf; very different are those of London:

<sup>1</sup> "The beauty of the ornamental gate-ways in the middle of Chinese streets arises wholly from the painting and gilding, and not from the proportions, which are weak and flimsy."—DAVIS, *Chinese*, ii. 320.

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in the midst of their pavements a great lazy puddle moves muddily along; heavy-laden machines, with wheels of unwieldy thickness, crowd up every passage; so that a stranger, instead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces.

The houses borrow very few ornaments from architecture; their chief decoration seems to be a paltry piece of painting hung out at their doors or windows, at once a proof of their indigence and vanity: their vanity, in each having one of those pictures exposed to public view; and their indigence, in being unable to get them better painted. In this respect, the fancy of their painters is also deplorable. Could you believe it? I have seen five black lions and three blue boars in less than the circuit of half a mile; and yet you know that animals of these colors are nowhere to be found except in the wild imaginations of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

From these circumstances in their buildings, and from the dismal looks of the inhabitants, I am induced to conclude that the nation is actually poor; and that, like the Persians, they make a splendid figure everywhere but at home. The proverb of Xixofou is, that a man's riches may be seen in his eyes; if we judge of the English by this rule, there is not a poorer nation under the sun.

I have been here but two days, so will not be hasty in my decisions; such letters as I shall write to Fipsihi in Moscow, I beg you'll endeavor to forward with all diligence; I shall send them open, in order that you may take copies or translations, as you are equally versed in the Dutch and Chinese languages. Dear friend, think of my absence with regret, as I sincerely regret yours; even while I write, I lament our separation. Farewell.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Our streets are filled with blue boars, black swans, and red lions; not to mention flying pigs, and hogs in armor. Strange! that one who has all the birds and beasts in nature to choose out of, should live at the sign of an *Ens Rationis*." —ADDISON. The house or door signs of London were taken down in 1766, and numbers and names substituted in their stead. The removal diminished considerably the picturesque character of the streets. See Letter LXXVII.



### LETTER III.

THE DESCRIPTION OF LONDON CONTINUED.—THE LUXURY OF THE ENGLISH, ITS BENEFITS.—THE FINE GENTLEMAN.—THE FINE LADY.

*From Lien Chi Altangi, to the care of Fipsihi, resident in Moscow; to be forwarded by the Russian caravan to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.*

THINK not, O thou guide of my youth, that absence can impair my respect, or interposing trackless deserts blot your reverend figure from my memory. The farther I travel I feel the pain of separation with stronger force; those ties that bind me to my native country and you, are still unbroken. By every remove, I only drag a greater length of chain.<sup>1</sup>

Could I find aught worth transmitting from so remote a region as this to which I have wandered, I should gladly send it; but, instead of this, you must be contented with a renewal of my former professions, and an imperfect account of a people with whom I am as yet but superficially acquainted. The remarks of a man who has been but three days in the country can only be those obvious circumstances which force themselves upon the imagination. I consider myself here as a newly created being introduced into a new world; every object strikes with wonder and surprise. The imagination, still unsated, seems the only active principle of the mind. The most trifling occurrences give pleasure till the gloss of novelty is worn away. When I have ceased to wonder, I may possibly grow wise;<sup>2</sup> I may then call the reasoning principle to my aid, and compare those objects with each other, which were before examined without reflection.

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<sup>1</sup> "And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."—*The Traveller*, 1765.

<sup>2</sup> "But wondering is not the way to grow wise."—*Inquiry into Polite Learning*.

Behold me, then, in London, gazing at the strangers, and they at me; it seems they find somewhat absurd in my figure; and had I been never from home, it is possible I might find an infinite fund of ridicule in theirs; but by long travelling I am taught to laugh at folly alone, and to find nothing truly ridiculous but villany and vice.

When I had just quitted my native country, and crossed the Chinese wall, I fancied every deviation from the customs and manners of China was a departing from nature; I smiled at the blue lips and red foreheads of the Tonguese; and could hardly contain when I saw the Daures dress their heads with horns. The Ostiacs powdered with red earth; and the Calmuck beauties, tricked out in all the finery of sheep-skin, appeared highly ridiculous; but I soon perceived that the ridicule lay not in them, but in me; that I falsely condemned others of absurdity, because they happened to differ from a standard originally founded in prejudice or partiality.

I find no pleasure, therefore, in taxing the English with departing from nature in their external appearance, which is all I yet know of their character; it is possible they only endeavor to improve her simple plan, since every extravagance in dress proceeds from a desire of becoming more beautiful than nature made us; and this is so harmless a vanity, that I not only pardon but approve it. A desire to be more excellent than others is what actually makes us so, and as thousands find a livelihood in society by such appetites, none but the ignorant inveigh against them.

You are not insensible, most reverend Fum Hoam, what numberless trades, even among the Chinese, subsist by the harmless pride of each other. Your nose-borers, feet-swathers, tooth-stainers, eyebrow pluckers would all want bread should their neighbors want vanity. These vanities, however, employ much fewer hands in China than in England; and a fine gentleman, or a fine lady, here dressed up to the fashion, seems scarcely to have a single limb that does not suffer some distortions from art.

To make a fine gentleman, several trades are required, but chiefly a barber. You have undoubtedly heard of the Jewish

champion whose strength lay in his hair ; one would think that the English were for placing all wisdom there : to appear wise, nothing more is requisite here than for a man to borrow hair from the heads of all his neighbors, and clap it like a bush on his own ; the distributors of law and physic stick on such quantities, that it is almost impossible, even in idea, to distinguish between the head and the hair.

Those whom I have now been describing affect the gravity of the lion ; those I am going to describe, more resemble the pert vivacity of smaller animal. The barber, who is still master of the ceremonies, cuts their hair close to the crown ; and then with a composition of meal and hog's lard plasters the whole in such a manner, as to make it impossible to distinguish whether the patient wears a cap or a plaster ; but, to make the picture more perfectly striking, conceive the tail of some beast—a greyhound's tail, or a pig's tail, for instance—appended to the back of the head, and reaching down to that place where tails in other animals are generally seen to begin ; thus betailed and bepowdered, the man of taste fancies he improves in beauty, dresses up his hard-featured face in smiles, and attempts to look hideously tender. Thus equipped, he is qualified to make love, and hopes for success, more from the powder on the outside of his head than the sentiments within.

Yet when I consider what sort of a creature the fine lady is to whom he is supposed to pay his addresses, it is not strange to find him thus equipped in order to please. She is herself every whit as fond of powder and tails, and hog's lard, as he. To speak my secret sentiments, most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horridly ugly ; I can hardly endure the sight of them ; they no way resemble the beauties of China ; the Europeans have a quite different idea of beauty from us. When I reflect on the small-footed perfections of an Eastern beauty, how is it possible I should have eyes for a woman whose feet are ten inches long ? I shall never forget the beauties of my native city of Nangfew. How very broad their faces ! how very short their noses ! how very little their eyes ! how very thin their lips ! how very black their teeth ! the snow on the tops

of Bao is not fairer than their cheeks : and their eyebrows as small as the line by the pencil of Quamsi. Here a lady with such perfections would be frightful ; Dutch and Chinese beauties, indeed, have some resemblance, but English women are entirely different ; red cheeks, big eyes, and teeth of a most odious whiteness are not only seen here, but wished for ; and then they have such masculine feet, as actually serve *some* for walking !

Yet uncivil as Nature has been, they seem resolved to outdo her in unkindness ; they use white powder, blue powder, and black powder for their hair, and a red powder for the face on some particular occasions.

They like to have the face of various colors, as among the Tartars of Koreki, frequently sticking on, with spittle, little black patches on every part of it, except on the tip of the nose, which I have never seen with a patch. You'll have a better idea of their manner of placing these spots, when I have finished a map of an English face patched up to the fashion, which shall shortly be sent to increase your curious collection of paintings, medals, and monsters.

But what surprises more than all the rest is what I have just now been credibly informed by one of this country. "Most ladies here," says he, "have two faces; one face to sleep in, and another to show in company : the first is generally reserved for the husband and family at home ; the other put on to please strangers abroad. The family face is often indifferent enough, but the out-door one looks something better ; this is always made at the toilet, where the looking-glass and toad-eater sit in council, and settle the complexion of the day."

I can't ascertain the truth of this remark ; however, it is actually certain that they wear more clothes within doors than without ; and I have seen a lady, who seemed to shudder at a breeze in her own apartment, appear half-naked in the streets. Farewell.

## LETTER IV.

ENGLISH PRIDE.—LIBERTY.—AN INSTANCE OF BOTH.—NEWS-PAPERS.—POLITENESS.

*To the Same.*

THE English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival I attributed that reserve to modesty, which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are sure of their acquaintance; stoop to flattery, and you conciliate their friendship and esteem. They bear hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the miseries of life without shrinking; danger only calls forth their fortitude; they even exult in calamity; but contempt is what they cannot bear. An Englishman fears contempt more than death; he often flies to death as a refuge from its pressure, and dies when he fancies the world has ceased to esteem him.

Pride seems the source not only of their national vices, but of their national virtues also. An Englishman is taught to love his king as his friend, but to acknowledge no other master than the laws which himself has contributed to enact. He despises those nations who, that one may be free, are all content to be slaves; who first lift a tyrant into terror, and then shrink under his power as if delegated from heaven. Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies; and thousands might be found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, though perhaps not one of all the number understands its meaning. The lowest mechanic, however, looks upon it as his duty to be a watchful guardian of his country's freedom, and often uses a language that might seem haughty, even in the mouth of the great emperor who traces his ancestry to the moon.

A few days ago, passing by one of their prisons, I could not avoid stopping, in order to listen to a dialogue, which I

thought might afford me some entertainment. The conversation was carried on between a debtor through the grate of his prison, a porter who had stopped to rest his burden, and a soldier at the window. The subject was upon a threatened invasion from France, and each seemed extremely anxious to rescue his country from the impending danger. "For my part," cries the prisoner, "the greatest of my apprehensions is for our freedom; if the French should conquer, what would become of English liberty? My dear friends, liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives; of that the French shall never deprive us; it is not to be expected that men who are slaves themselves would preserve our freedom should they happen to conquer." "Ay, slaves," cries the porter, "they are all slaves, fit only to carry burdens, every one of them. Before I would stoop to slavery, may this be my poison (and he held the goblet in his hand), may this be my poison<sup>1</sup>—but I would sooner list for a soldier."

The soldier, taking the goblet from his friend, with much awe fervently cried out, "It is not so much our liberties as our religion that would suffer by such a change; ay, our religion, my lads. May the devil sink me into flames" (such was the solemnity of his adjuration), "if the French should come over, but our religion would be utterly undone." So saying, instead of a libation, he applied the goblet to his lips, and confirmed his sentiments with a ceremony of the most persevering devotion.

In short, every man here pretends to be a politician; even the fair sex are sometimes found to mix the severity of national altercation with the blandishments of love, and often become conquerors by more weapons of destruction than their eyes.

This universal passion for politics is gratified by daily

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<sup>1</sup> A phrase used in the "Adventures of a Strolling Player" (Essay XXI. Vol. V.), in "The Haunch of Venison," Vol. I. p. 69, and in Vol. VI. p. 12:

"And, madam," quoth he, "may this bit be my poison,  
A prettier dinner I never set eyes on."

gazettes, as with us at China.<sup>1</sup> But as in ours the emperor endeavors to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavor to instruct the administration. You must not, however, imagine that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics or the government of a state; they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house; which oracle has himself gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming-table, who has pillaged his knowledge from a great man's porter, who has had his information from the great man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his own amusement the night preceding.

The English, in general, seem fonder of gaining the esteem than the love of those they converse with. This gives a formality to their amusements; their gayest conversations have something too wise for innocent relaxation; though in company you are seldom disgusted with the absurdity of a fool, you are seldom lifted into rapture by those strokes of vivacity which give instant though not permanent pleasure.

What they want, however, in gayety, they make up in politeness. You smile at hearing me praise the English for their politeness; you who have heard very different accounts from the missionaries at Peking, who have seen such a different behavior in their merchants and seamen at home. But I must still repeat it, the English seem more polite than any of their neighbors; their great art in this respect lies in endeavoring, while they oblige, to lessen the force of the favor. Other countries are fond of obliging a stranger; but seem desirous that he should be sensible of the obligation. The English confer their kindness with an appearance of indifference, and give away benefits with an air as if they despised them.

Walking a few days ago, between an English and a French man, into the suburbs of the city, we were overtaken by a

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<sup>1</sup> When Lord Macartney visited China gazettes were published at Peking, under the authority of government. The various appointments throughout the empire, the remission of taxes to districts suffering by dearth, the sovereign's rewards for extraordinary services, remarkable instances of longevity, and even cases of *crim. con.* were regularly recorded. See MACARTNEY'S *Embassy*, ii. 296.

heavy shower of rain. I was unprepared ; but they had each large coats, which defended them from what seemed to me a perfect inundation. The Englishman seeing me shrink from the weather, accosted me thus : " Pshaw, man, what dost shrink at ? here, take this coat ; I don't want it ; I find it no way useful to me ; I had as lief be without it." The Frenchman began to show his politeness in turn. " My dear friend," cries he, " why won't you oblige me by making use of my coat ? You see how well it defends me from the rain ; I should not choose to part with it to others, but to such a friend as you I could even part with my skin to do him service."

From such minute instances as these, most reverend Fum Hoam, I am sensible your sagacity will collect instruction. The volume of nature is the book of knowledge ; and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection. Farewell.

## LETTER V.

ENGLISH PASSION FOR POLITICS.—A SPECIMEN OF A NEWSPAPER.  
—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MANNERS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

*To the Same.*

I HAVE already informed you of the singular passion of this nation for politics. An Englishman, not satisfied with finding, by his own prosperity, the contending powers of Europe properly balanced, desires also to know the precise value of every weight in either scale. To gratify this curiosity, a leaf of political instruction is served up every morning with tea : when our politician has feasted upon this, he repairs to a coffee-house, in order to ruminate upon what he has read, and increase his collection ; from thence he proceeds to the ordinary, inquires what news, and treasuring up every acquisition there, hunts about all the evening in quest of more, and carefully adds it to the rest. Thus at night he retires home, full of the important advices of the day ; when lo ! awaking next morning, he finds the instructions of yester-



day a collection of absurdity or palpable falsehood. This one would think a mortifying repulse in the pursuit of wisdom ; yet our politician, no way discouraged, hunts on, in order to collect fresh materials, and in order to be again disappointed.

I have often admired the commercial spirit which prevails over Europe ; have been surprised to see them carry on a traffic with productions that an Asiatic stranger would deem entirely useless. It is a proverb in China, that a European suffers not even his spittle to be lost ; the maxim, however, is not sufficiently strong, since they sell even their lies to great advantage. Every nation drives a considerable trade in this commodity with their neighbors.

An English dealer in this way, for instance, has only to ascend to his workhouse, and manufacture a turbulent speech, averred to be spoken in the senate ; or a report supposed to be dropped at court ; a piece of scandal that strikes at a popular mandarin ; or a secret treaty between two neighboring powers. When finished, these goods are baled up, and consigned to a factor abroad, who sends in return two battles, three sieges, and a shrewd letter filled with dashes —, blanks —, and stars \* \* \* \* of great importance.

Thus you perceive that a single gazette is the joint manufacture of Europe ; and he who would peruse it with a philosophical eye might perceive in every paragraph something characteristic of the nation to which it belongs. A map does not exhibit a more distinct view of the boundaries and situation of every country, than its news does a picture of the genius and the morals of its inhabitants. The superstition and erroneous delicacy of Italy, the formality of Spain, the cruelty of Portugal, the fears of Austria, the confidence of Prussia, the levity of France, the avarice of Holland, the pride of England, the absurdity of Ireland, and the national partiality of Scotland are all conspicuous in every page.

But, perhaps, you may find more satisfaction in a real newspaper, than in my description of one ; I therefore send a specimen, which may serve to exhibit the manner of their being written, and distinguish the characters of the various nations which are united in its composition.

*Naples.*—"We have lately dug up here a curious Etruscan monument, broken in two in the raising. The characters are scarce visible; but Nugosi, the learned antiquary, supposes it to have been erected in honor of Picus, a Latin king, as one of the lines may be plainly distinguished to begin with a P. It is hoped this discovery will produce something valuable, as the literati of our twelve academies are deeply engaged in the disquisition."

*Pisa.*—"Since father Fudgi,<sup>1</sup> prior of St. Gilbert's, has gone to reside at Rome, no miracles have been performed at the shrine of St. Gilbert: the devout begin to grow uneasy, and some begin actually to fear that St. Gilbert has forsaken them with the reverend father."

*Lucca.*—"The administrators of our serene republic have frequent conferences upon the part they shall take in the present commotions of Europe. Some are for sending a body of their troops, consisting of one company of foot and six horsemen, to make a diversion in favor of the empress-queen; others are as strenuous assertors of the Prussian interest; what turn these debates may take, time only can discover. However, certain it is, we shall be able to bring into the field, at the opening of the next campaign, seventy-five armed men, a commander-in-chief, and two drummers of great experience."

*Spain.*—"Yesterday the new king showed himself to his subjects, and, after having stayed half an hour in his balcony, retired to the royal apartment. The night concluded on this extraordinary occasion with illuminations, and other demonstrations of joy. The queen is more beautiful than the rising sun, and reckoned one of the first wits in Europe; she had a glorious opportunity of displaying the readiness of her invention, and her skill in repartee, lately at court. The Duke of Lerma, coming up to her with a low bow and a smile, and presenting a nosegay set with diamonds, 'Madam,' cries he, 'I am your most obedient humble servant.' 'Oh, sir,' replies the queen, without any prompter, or the least hesitation, 'I'm

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<sup>1</sup> Father Fudgi was doubtless the original of *Fudge*, the persevering exclamation of Burchell in "The Vicar of Wakefield."

*Madame Pompadour*

Madame Poupard

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very proud of the very great honor you do me.' Upon which she made a low courtesy, and all the courtiers fell a-laughing at the readiness and the smartness of her reply."

*Lisbon*.—"Yesterday we had an *auto-da-fé*, at which were burnt three young women accused of heresy, one of them of exquisite beauty, two Jews, and an old woman convicted of being a witch: one of the friars, who attended this last, reports that he saw the devil fly out of her, at the stake, in the shape of a flame of fire. The populace behaved on this occasion with great good-humor, joy, and sincere devotion.<sup>1</sup>

"Our merciful sovereign has been for some time past recovered of his fright; though so atrocious an attempt<sup>2</sup> deserved to exterminate half the nation, yet he has been graciously pleased to spare the lives of his subjects, and not above five hundred have been broken upon the wheel, or otherwise executed,<sup>3</sup> upon this horrid occasion."

*Vienna*.—"We have received certain advices that a party of twenty thousand Austrians, having attacked a much superior body of Prussians, put them all to flight, and took the rest prisoners of war."

*Berlin*.—"We have received certain advices that a party of twenty thousand Prussians, having attacked a much superior body of Austrians, put them to flight, and took a great number of prisoners, with their military chest, cannon, and baggage. Though we have not succeeded this campaign to our wishes; yet, when we think of him who commands us,

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<sup>1</sup> "At the *auto-da-fé* at Lisbon, on the 20th September (1761), the number of criminals amounted to fifty-four, including three in effigy. Father Malagrida was the only person burnt at the stake for writing heretical books, and pretending to the spirit of prophecy and revelations. This *auto* exceeded all before it in magnificence; the boxes were built round the square *Da Rosico*, and all the regiments of horse and foot attended upon duty. The nobility, judges, and great officers of state were present, and a grand entertainment was given in the convent by the inquisitor Nuno de Mello."—*Gentleman's Mag.* for 1761, vol. xxxi. p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> A conspiracy against the life of the King of Portugal, attempted in September, 1758, as he was going at night through the streets of Lisbon. Many Jesuits, and several of the noble families of the dukes D'Aveiro and marquises of Tavora, were put to death for it.

<sup>3</sup> Some of the assassins were burnt alive, and their ashes thrown into the sea.



we rest in security: while we sleep, our king is watchful for our safety."

*Paris*.—"We shall soon strike a signal blow. We have seventeen flat-bottomed boats at Havre. The people are in excellent spirits, and our ministers make no difficulty in raising the supplies.

"We are all undone; the people are discontented to the last degree; the ministers are obliged to have recourse to the most rigorous methods to raise the expenses of the war.

"Our distresses are great; but Madame Pompadour continues to supply our king, who is now growing old, with a fresh lady every night. His health, thank Heaven! is still pretty well; nor is he in the least unfit, as was reported, for any kind of royal exertion. He was so frightened at the affair of Damiens,<sup>1</sup> that his physicians were apprehensive lest his reason should suffer, but that wretch's tortures soon composed the kingly terrors of his breast."

*England*.—"Wanted an usher to an academy. N.B.—He must be able to read, dress hair, and must have had the small-pox."

*Dublin*.—"We hear that there is a benevolent subscription on foot among the nobility and gentry of this kingdom, who are great patrons of merit, in order to assist Black and All Black in his contest with the Paddereen mare.<sup>2</sup> We hear from Germany that Prince Ferdinand has gained a complete victory, and taken twelve kettle-drums, five standards, and four wagons of ammunition, prisoners of war."

*Edinburgh*.—"We are positive when we say that Saunders M'Gregor, who was lately executed for horse-stealing, is not a Scotchman, but born in Carrickfergus." Farewell.

<sup>1</sup> "Luke's iron crown and Damiens' bed of steel."—*The Traveller*.

<sup>2</sup> A celebrated Irish racer. "There has been more money spent in the encouragement of the Padareen mare there [in Ireland] in one season, than given in rewards to learned men since the times of Usher."—*Goldsmith to Daniel Hodson, Dec. 27, 1757*.



## LETTER VI.

HAPPINESS LOST BY SEEKING AFTER REFINEMENT.—THE CHINESE  
PHILOSOPHER'S DISGRACES.

*Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, to Lien Chi  
Altangi, the discontented Wanderer: by the way of Moscow.*

WHETHER sporting on the flowery banks of the river Irtis, or scaling the steepy mountains of Douchenour; whether traversing the black deserts of Kobi, or giving lessons of politeness to the savage inhabitants of Europe; in whatever country, whatever climate, and whatever circumstances, all hail! May Tien, the universal soul, take you under his protection, and inspire you with a superior portion of himself!

How long, my friend, shall an enthusiasm for knowledge continue to obstruct your happiness, and tear you from all the connections that make life pleasing? How long will you continue to rove from climate to climate, circled by thousands, and yet without a friend, feeling all the inconveniences of a crowd, and all the anxiety of being alone?

I know you will reply, that the refined pleasure of growing every day wiser is a sufficient recompense for every inconvenience. I know you will talk of the vulgar satisfaction of soliciting happiness from sensual enjoyment only; and probably enlarge upon the exquisite raptures of sentimental bliss. Yet, believe me, friend, you are deceived; all our pleasures, though seemingly never so remote from sense, derive their origin from some one of the senses. The most exquisite demonstration in mathematics, or the most pleasing disquisition in metaphysics, if it does not ultimately tend to increase some sensual satisfaction, is delightful only to fools, or to men who have by long habit contracted a false idea of pleasure; and he who separates sensual and sentimental enjoyments, seeking happiness from mind alone, is, in fact, as wretched as the naked inhabitant of the forest, who places

all happiness in the first, regardless of the latter. There are two extremes in this respect—the savage, who swallows down the draught of pleasure without staying to reflect on his happiness; and the sage, who passeth the cup while he reflects on the conveniences of drinking.

It is with a heart full of sorrow, my dear Altangi, that I must inform you, that what the world calls happiness must now be yours no longer. Our great emperor's displeasure at your leaving China, contrary to the rules of our government and the immemorial custom of the empire, has produced the most terrible effects. Your wife, daughter, and the rest of your family, have been seized by his order, and appropriated to his use; all, except your son, are now the peculiar property of him who possesses all: him I have hidden from the officers employed for this purpose; and even at the hazard of my life I have concealed him. The youth seems obstinately bent on finding you out, wherever you are; he is determined to face every danger that opposes his pursuit. Though yet but fifteen, all his father's virtues and obstinacy sparkle in his eyes, and mark him as one destined to no mediocrity of fortune.

You see, my dearest friend, what imprudence has brought thee to; from opulence, a tender family, surrounding friends, and your master's esteem, it has reduced thee to want, persecution, and, still worse, to our mighty monarch's displeasure. Want of prudence is too frequently the want of virtue; nor is there on earth a more powerful advocate for vice than poverty. As I shall endeavor to guard thee from the one, so guard thyself from the other; and still think of me with affection and esteem. Farewell.



## LETTER VII.

THE TIE OF WISDOM ONLY TO MAKE US HAPPY.—THE BENEFITS OF TRAVELLING UPON THE MORALS OF A PHILOSOPHER.

*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fun Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy in China.*

The Editor thinks proper to acquaint the reader, that the greatest part of the following letter seems to him to be little more than a rhapsody of sentences borrowed from Confucius, the Chinese philosopher.

A WIFE, a daughter, carried into captivity to expiate my offence, a son scarce yet arrived at maturity, resolving to encounter every danger in the pious pursuit of one who has undone him—these, indeed, are circumstances of distress; though my tears were more precious than the gem of Golconda, yet would they fall upon such an occasion.

But I submit to the stroke of Heaven: I hold the volume of Confucius in my hand, and as I read, grow humble, and patient, and wise. We should feel sorrow, says he, but not sink under its oppression. The heart of a wise man should resemble a mirror, which reflects every object without being sullied by any. The wheel of fortune turns incessantly round; and who can say within himself, I shall to-day be uppermost? We should hold the immutable mean that lies between insensibility and anguish; our attempts should be not to extinguish nature, but to repress it; not to stand unmoved at distress, but endeavor to turn every disaster to our own advantage. Our greatest glory is, not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

I fancy myself at present, O thou reverend disciple of Taou,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Taou appeared nearly simultaneously with Confucius. As far as can be gathered of the real drift of his doctrines, he seems to have inculcated a contempt of riches and honors, and all worldly distinctions, and to have aimed, like Epicurus, at subduing every passion that could interfere with personal tranquillity and self-enjoyment."—DAVIS, vol. ii. p. 114.

more than a match for all that can happen. The chief business of my life has been to procure wisdom, and the chief object of that wisdom was to be happy. My attendance on your lectures, my conferences with the missionaries of Europe, and all my subsequent adventures upon quitting China, were calculated to increase the sphere of my happiness, not my curiosity. Let European travellers cross seas and deserts merely to measure the height of a mountain, to describe the cataract of a river, or tell the commodities which every country may produce: merchants or geographers, perhaps, may find profit by such discoveries, but what advantage can accrue to a philosopher from such accounts, who is desirous of understanding the human heart, who seeks to know the *men* of every country, who desires to discover those differences which result from climate, religion, education, prejudice, and partiality?

I should think my time very ill-bestowed, were the only fruits of my adventures to consist in being able to tell that a tradesman of London lives in a house three times as high as that of our great emperor; that the ladies wear longer clothes than the men; that the priests are dressed in colors which we are taught to detest, and that their soldiers wear scarlet, which is with us the symbol of peace and innocence. How many travellers are there who confine their relations to such minute and useless particulars! For one who enters into the genius of those nations with whom he has conversed, who discloses their morals, their opinions, the ideas which they entertain of religious worship, the intrigues of their ministers, and their skill in sciences, there are twenty who only mention some idle particulars, which can be of no real use to a true philosopher. All their remarks tend neither to make themselves nor others more happy; they no way contribute to control their passions, to bear adversity, to inspire true virtue, or raise a detestation of vice.

Men may be very learned, and yet very miserable; it is easy to be a deep geometrician, or a sublime astronomer, but very difficult to be a good man. I esteem, therefore, the traveller who instructs the heart, but despise him who only

indulges the imagination. A man who leaves home to mend himself and others is a philosopher; but he who goes from country to country, guided by the blind impulse of curiosity, is only a vagabond. From Zerdusht<sup>1</sup> down to him of Tyanæa,<sup>2</sup> I honor all those great names who endeavor to unite the world by their travels: such men grew wiser as well as better, the farther they departed from home, and seemed like rivers, whose streams are not only increased, but refined, as they travel from their source.

For my own part, my greatest glory is, that travelling has not more steeled my constitution against all the vicissitudes of climate, and all the depressions of fatigue, than it has my mind against the accidents of fortune, or the accesses of despair. Farewell.

## LETTER VIII.

THE CHINESE DECEIVED BY A PROSTITUTE IN THE STREETS OF LONDON.

*To the Same.*

How insupportable, O thou possessor of heavenly wisdom, would be this separation, this immeasurable distance from my friends, were I not able thus to delineate my heart upon paper, and to send thee daily a map of my mind!

I am every day better reconciled to the people among whom I reside, and begin to fancy that in time I shall find them more opulent, more charitable, and more hospitable than I at first imagined. I begin to learn somewhat of their manners and customs, and to see reasons for several deviations which they make from us, from whom all other nations derive their politeness as well as their original.

In spite of taste, in spite of prejudice, I now begin to think their women tolerable. I can now look on a languishing

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<sup>1</sup> Zoroaster.

<sup>2</sup> Apollonius of Tyanæa, the celebrated traveller, astrologer, etc., who numbered Vespasian among his dupes.

blue eye without disgust, and pardon a set of teeth even though whiter than ivory. I now begin to fancy there is no universal standard for beauty. The truth is, the manners of the ladies in this city are so very open and so vastly engaging, that I am inclined to pass over the more glaring defects of their persons, since compensated by the more solid, yet latent beauties of the mind. What though they want black teeth, or are deprived of the allurements of feet no bigger than their thumbs, yet still they have souls, my friend; such souls, so free, so pressing, so hospitable, and so engaging! I have received more invitations in the streets of London from the sex in one night, than I have met with at Pekin in twelve revolutions of the moon.

Every evening, as I return home from my usual solitary excursions, I am met by several of those well-disposed daughters of hospitality, at different times, and in different streets, richly dressed, and with minds not less noble than their appearance. You know that nature has indulged me with a person by no means agreeable; yet are they too generous to object to my homely appearance; they feel no repugnance at my broad face and flat nose; they perceive me to be a stranger, and that alone is a sufficient recommendation. They even seem to think it their duty to do the honors of the country by every act of complaisance in their power. One takes me under the arm, and in a manner forces me along; another catches me round the neck, and desires to partake in this office of hospitality; while a third, kinder still, invites me to refresh my spirits with wine. Wine is in England reserved only for the rich; yet here even wine is given away to the stranger!

A few nights ago, one of these generous creatures, dressed all in white, and flaunting like a meteor by my side, forcibly attended me home to my own apartment. She seemed charmed with the elegance of the furniture, and the convenience of my situation: and well indeed she might, for I have hired an apartment for not less than two shillings of their money every week. But her civility did not rest here; for at parting, being desirous to know the hour and perceiving

my watch out of order, she kindly took it to be repaired by a relation of her own, which you may imagine will save some expense; and she assures me that it will cost her nothing. I shall have it back in a few days, when mended, and am preparing a proper speech, expressive of my gratitude on the occasion. "Celestial excellence," I intend to say, "happy I am in having found out, after many painful adventures, a land of innocence, and a people of humanity: I may rove into other elimes, and converse with nations yet unknown, but where shall I meet a soul of such purity as that which resides in thy breast? Sure thou hast been nurtured by the bill of the Shin Shin, or sucked the breasts of the provident Gin Hiung. The melody of thy voice could rob the Chong Fou of her whelps, or inveigle the Boh that lives in the midst of the waters. Thy servant shall ever retain a sense of thy favors, and one day boast of thy virtue, sincerity, and truth, among the daughters of China." Adieu.

## LETTER IX.

THE LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE ENGLISH WITH REGARD TO WOMEN.  
—A CHARACTER OF A WOMAN'S MAN.

*To the Same.*

I HAVE been deceived! She whom I fancied a daughter of paradise has proved to be one of the infamous disciples of Han! I have lost a trifle; I have gained the consolation of having discovered a deceiver. I once more, therefore, relax into my former indifference with regard to the English ladies; they once more begin to appear disagreeable in my eyes. Thus is my whole time passed in forming conclusions which the next minute's experience may probably destroy; the present moment becomes a comment on the past, and I improve rather in humility than wisdom.

Their laws and religion forbid the English to keep more than one woman; I therefore concluded that prostitutes were

banished from society. I was deceived; every man here keeps as many wives as he can maintain. The laws are cemented with blood, praised, and disregarded. The very Chinese, whose religion allows him two wives, takes not half the liberties of the English in this particular. Their laws may be compared to the books of the Sibyls; they are held in great veneration, but seldom read, or seldomer understood; even those who pretend to be their guardians dispute about the meaning of many of them, and confess their ignorance of others. The law, therefore, which commands them to have but one wife is strictly observed only by those for whom one is more than sufficient, or by such as have not money to buy two. As for the rest, they violate it publicly, and some glory in its violation. They seem to think, like the Persians, that they give evident marks of manhood by increasing their seraglio. A mandarin, therefore, here generally keeps four wives, a gentleman three, and a stage-player two. As for the magistrates, the country justices, and squires, they are employed first in debauching young virgins, and then punishing the transgression.

From such a picture you will be apt to conclude that he who employs four ladies for his amusement has four times as much constitution to spare as he who is contented with one; that a mandarin is much cleverer than a gentleman, and a gentleman than a player; and yet it is quite the reverse: a mandarin is frequently supported on spindle shanks, appears emaciated by luxury, and is obliged to have recourse to variety, merely from the weakness, not the vigor, of his constitution—the number of his wives being the most equivocal symptom of his virility.

Beside the country squire, there is also another set of men whose whole employment consists in corrupting beauty. These the silly part of the fair sex call amiable; the more sensible part of them, however, give them the title of abominable. You will probably demand what are the talents of a man thus caressed by the majority of the opposite sex? what talents, or what beauty is he possessed of superior to the rest of his fellows? To answer you directly, he has neither tal-



ents nor beauty, but then he is possessed of impudence and assiduity. With assiduity and impudence, men of all ages and all figures may commence admirers. I have even been told of some who made professions of expiring for love, when all the world could perceive they were going to die of old age; and what is more surprising still, such battered beaux are generally most infamously successful.

A fellow of this kind employs three hours every morning in dressing his head, by which is understood only his hair. He is a professed admirer, not of any particular lady, but of the whole sex. He is to suppose every lady has caught cold every night, which gives him an opportunity of calling to see how she does the next morning. He is upon all occasions to show himself in very great pain for the ladies: if a lady drops even a pin he is to fly in order to present it. He never speaks to a lady without advancing his mouth to her ear, by which he frequently addresses more senses than one. Upon proper occasions he looks excessively tender. This is performed by laying his hand upon his heart, shutting his eyes, and showing his teeth. He is excessively fond of dancing a minuet with the ladies, by which is only meant walking round the floor eight or ten times with his hat on, affecting great gravity, and sometimes looking tenderly on his partner. He never affronts any man himself, and never resents an affront from another. He has an infinite variety of small talk upon all occasions, and laughs when he has nothing more to say. Such is the killing creature who prostrates himself to the sex till he has undone them; all whose submissions are the effects of design, and who to please the ladies almost becomes himself a lady.

## LETTER X.

THE JOURNEY OF THE CHINESE FROM PEKIN TO MOSCOW.—THE  
CUSTOMS OF THE DAURES.

*To the Same.*

I HAVE hitherto given you no account of my journey from China to Europe, of my travels through countries where Nature sports in primeval rudeness, where she pours forth her wonders in solitude; countries from whence the rigorous climate, the sweeping inundation, the drifted desert, the howling forest, and mountains of immeasurable height banish the husbandman and spread extensive desolation; countries where the brown Tartar wanders for a precarious subsistence, with a heart that never felt pity, himself more hideous than the wilderness he makes.

You will easily conceive the fatigue of crossing vast tracts of land, either desolate, or still more dangerous by its inhabitants; the retreat of men who seem driven from society in order to make war upon all the human race; nominally professing a subjection to Muscovy or China, but without any resemblance to the countries on which they depend.

After I had crossed the great wall, the first objects that presented themselves were the remains of desolated cities, and all the magnificence of venerable ruin. There were to be seen temples of beautiful structure, statues wrought by the hand of a master, and around, a country of luxuriant plenty; but not one single inhabitant to reap the bounties of Nature. These were prospects that might humble the pride of kings, and repress human vanity. I asked my guide the cause of such desolation. These countries, says he, were once the dominions of a Tartar prince; and these ruins the seat of arts, elegance, and ease. This prince waged an unsuccessful war with one of the emperors of China; he was conquered, his cities plundered, and all his subjects carried into captivity.

Such are the effects of the ambition of kings! Ten dervises, says the Indian proverb, shall sleep in peace upon a single carpet, while two kings shall quarrel, though they have kingdoms to divide them. Sure, my friend, the cruelty and the pride of man have made more deserts than Nature ever made! she is kind, but man is ungrateful.

Proceeding in my journey through this pensive scene of desolated beauty, in a few days I arrived among the Daures, a nation still dependent on China. Xaizigar is their principal city, which, compared with those of Europe, scarcely deserves the name. The governors, and other officers, who are sent yearly from Peking, abuse their authority, and often take the wives and daughters of the inhabitants to themselves. The Daures, accustomed to base submission, feel no resentment at these injuries, or stifle what they feel. Custom and necessity teach even barbarians the same art of dissimulation, that ambition and intrigue inspire in the breasts of the polite. Upon beholding such unlicensed stretches of power, alas! thought I, how little does our wise and good emperor know of these intolerable exactions! these provinces are too distant for complaint, and too insignificant to expect redress. The more distant the government, the honester should be the governor to whom it is intrusted; for hope of impunity is a strong inducement to violation.

The religion of the Daures is more absurd than even that of the sectaries of Fohi. How would you be surprised, O sage disciple and follower of Confucius! you who believe one eternal intelligent cause of all, should you be present at the barbarous ceremonies of this infatuated people! How would you deplore the blindness and folly of mankind! His boasted reason seems only to light him astray, and brutal instinct more regularly points out the path to happiness. Could you think it? they adore a wicked divinity; they fear him and they worship him; they imagine him a malicious being, ready to injure and ready to be appeased. The men and women assemble at midnight in a hut, which serves for a temple. A priest stretches himself on the ground, and all the people pour forth the most horrid cries, while drums and

timbrels swell the infernal concert. After this dissonance, miscalled music, has continued about two hours, the priest rises from the ground, assumes an air of inspiration, grows big with the inspiring demon, and pretends to a skill in futurity.

In every country, my friend, the bonzes, the brachmans, and the priests deceive the people: all reformatations begin from the laity; the priests point us out the way to heaven with their fingers, but stand still themselves, nor seem to travel toward the country in view.

The customs of this people correspond to their religion. They keep their dead for three days on the same bed where the person died; after which they bury him in a grave moderately deep, but with the head still uncovered. Here for several days they present him different sorts of meats; which when they perceive he does not consume, they fill up the grave, and desist from desiring him to eat for the future. How, how can mankind be guilty of such strange absurdity? to entreat a dead body already putrid to partake of the banquet! Where, I again repeat it, is human reason? not only some men, but whole nations, seem divested of its illumination. Here we observe a whole country adoring a divinity through fear, and attempting to feed the dead. These are their most serious and most religious occupations; are these men rational, or are not the apes of Borneo more wise?

Certain I am, O thou instructor of my youth, that without philosophers, without some few virtuous men, who seem to be of a different nature from the rest of mankind, without such as these the worship of a wicked divinity would surely be established over every part of the earth. Fear guides more to their duty than gratitude: for one man who is virtuous from the love of virtue, from the obligation which he thinks he lies under to the Giver of All, there are ten thousand who are good only from their apprehensions of punishment. Could these last be persuaded, as the Epicureans were, that heaven had no thunders in store for the villain, they would no longer continue to acknowledge subordination, or thank that Being who gave them existence. Adieu.

## LETTER XI.

### THE BENEFITS OF LUXURY IN MAKING A PEOPLE MORE WISE AND HAPPY.

*To the Same.*

FROM such a picture of nature in primeval simplicity, tell me, my much respected friend, are you in love with fatigue and solitude? Do you sigh for the severe frugality of the wandering Tartar, or regret being born amid the luxury and dissimulation of the polite? Rather tell me, has not every kind of life vices peculiarly its own? Is it not a truth, that refined countries have more vices, but those not so terrible; barbarous nations few, and they of the most hideous complexion? Perfidy and fraud are the vices of civilized nations, credulity and violence those of the inhabitants of the desert. Does the luxury of the one produce half the evils of the inhumanity of the other? Certainly, those philosophers who declaim against luxury have but little understood its benefits; they seem insensible that to luxury we owe not only the greatest part of our knowledge, but even of our virtues.

It may sound fine in the mouth of a declaimer, when he talks of subduing our appetites, of teaching every sense to be content with a bare sufficiency, and of supplying only the wants of nature; but is there not more satisfaction in indulging those appetites, if with innocence and safety, than in restraining them? Am not I better pleased in enjoyment, than in the sullen satisfaction of thinking that I can live without enjoyment? The more various our artificial necessities, the wider is our circle of pleasure; for all pleasure consists in obviating necessities as they rise; luxury, therefore, as it increases our wants, increases our capacity for happiness.

Examine the history of any country remarkable for opu-

lence and wisdom, you will find they would never have been wise had they not been first luxurious; you will find poets, philosophers, and even patriots marching in luxury's train. The reason is obvious: we then only are curious after knowledge when we find it connected with sensual happiness. The senses ever point out the way, and reflection comments upon the discovery. Inform a native of the desert of Kobi of the exact measure of the parallax of the moon, he finds no satisfaction at all in the information; he wonders how any could take such pains, and lay out such treasure, in order to solve so useless a difficulty; but connect it with his happiness, by showing that it improves navigation, that by such an investigation he may have a warmer coat, a better gun, or a finer knife, and he is instantly in raptures at so great an improvement. In short, we only desire to know what we desire to possess; and whatever we may talk against it, luxury adds the spur to curiosity, and gives us a desire of becoming more wise.

But not our knowledge only, but our virtues are improved by luxury. Observe the brown savage of Thibet, to whom the fruits of the spreading pomegranate supply food, and its branches a habitation. Such a character has few vices, I grant, but those he has are of the most hideous nature; rapine and cruelty are scarce crimes in his eye; neither pity nor tenderness, which ennoble every virtue, has any place in his heart; he hates his enemies, and kills those he subdues. On the other hand, the polite Chinese and civilized European seem even to love their enemies. I have just now seen an instance where the English have succored those enemies whom their own countrymen actually refused to relieve.<sup>1</sup>

The greater the luxuries of every country, the more closely, politically speaking, is that country united. Luxury is the child of society alone; the luxurious man stands in need of a thousand different artists to furnish out his happiness; it is more likely, therefore, that he should be a good citizen who

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<sup>1</sup> Alluding to a large public subscription then going on in England for the relief of distressed French prisoners of war. The subject occurs again in Letter xxiii.

is connected by motives of self-interest with so many, than the abstemious man who is united to none.

In whatsoever light, therefore, we consider luxury—whether as employing a number of hands naturally too feeble for more laborious employment, as finding a variety of occupation for others who might be totally idle, or as furnishing out new inlets to happiness without encroaching on mutual property—in whatever light we regard it, we shall have reason to stand up in its defence, and the sentiment of Confucius still remains unshaken: “That we should enjoy as many of the luxuries of life as are consistent with our own safety and the prosperity of others; and that he who finds out a new pleasure is one of the most useful members of society.”<sup>1</sup>

## LETTER XII.

THE FUNERAL SOLEMNITIES OF THE ENGLISH.—THEIR PASSION FOR FLATTERING EPITAPHS.

*To the Same.*

FROM the funeral solemnities of the Daures, who think themselves the politest people in the world, I must make a

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<sup>1</sup> “On Tuesday, April 13, 1775, Johnson, Goldsmith, and I dined at General Oglethorpe’s. Goldsmith expatiated on the common topic that the race of our people was degenerated, and that this was owing to luxury. JOHNSON: ‘Sir, in the first place, I doubt the fact. I believe there are as many tall men in England now as ever there were. But, secondly, supposing the stature of our people to be diminished, that is not owing to luxury; for, sir, consider to how very small a proportion of our people luxury can reach. . . . Luxury, so far as it reaches the poor, will do good to the race of people; it will strengthen and multiply them. . . . Let us take a walk from Charing Cross to Whitechapel, through, I suppose, the greatest series of shops in the world: what is there in any of these shops (if you except gin-shops) that can do any human being any harm?’ GOLDSMITH: ‘Well, sir, I’ll accept your challenge. The very next shop to Northumberland House is a pickle-shop.’ JOHNSON: ‘Well, sir, do we not know that a maid can in one afternoon make pickles sufficient to serve a whole family for a year? nay, that five pickle-shops can serve all the kingdom? Besides, sir, there is no harm done to anybody by the making of pickles, or the eating of pickles.’—BOSWELL, by Croker, p. 251.

transition to the funeral solemnities of the English, who think themselves as polite as they. The numberless ceremonies which are used here when a person is sick appear to me so many evident marks of fear and apprehension. Ask an Englishman, however, whether he is afraid of death, and he boldly answers in the negative; but observe his behavior in circumstances of approaching sickness, and you will find his actions give his assertions the lie.

The Chinese are very sincere in this respect; they hate to die, and they confess their terrors;<sup>1</sup> a great part of their life is spent in preparing things proper for their funeral. A poor artisan will spend half his income in providing himself a tomb twenty years before he wants it; and denies himself the necessaries of life, that he may be amply provided for when he shall want them no more.<sup>2</sup>

But people of distinction in England really deserve pity; for they die in circumstances of the most extreme distress. It is an established rule never to let a man know that he is dying; physicians are sent for, the clergy are called, and everything passes in silent solemnity round the sick-bed. The patient is in agonies, looks round for pity; yet not a single creature will say that he is dying. If he is possessed of fortune, his relations entreat him to make his will, as it may restore the tranquillity of his mind. He is desired to undergo the rites of the Church, for decency requires it. His friends take their leave only because they do not care to see him in pain. In short, a hundred stratagems are used to make him do what he might have been induced to perform only by being told, "Sir, you are past all hopes, and had as good think decently of dying."

Besides all this, the chamber is darkened, the whole house echoes to the cries of the wife, the lamentations of the chil-

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<sup>1</sup> The Chinese seldom mention death except by a circumlocution, as "to become immortal;" that is, in the modified sense of the Buddhists.—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> Of all the subjects of their care, there are none which the Chinese so religiously attend to as the tombs of their ancestors, conceiving that any neglect is sure to be followed by worldly misfortune.—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 294.



dren, the grief of the servants, and the sighs of friends. The bed is surrounded with priests and doctors in black, and only flambeaux emit a yellow gloom. Where is the man, how intrepid soever, that would not shrink at such a hideous solemnity? For fear of affrighting their expiring friends, the English practise all that can fill them with terror. Strange effect of human prejudice, thus to torture, merely from mistaken tenderness!

You see, my friend, what contradictions there are in the tempers of those islanders: when prompted by ambition, revenge, or disappointment, they meet death with the utmost resolution; the very man who in his bed would have trembled at the aspect of a doctor, shall go with intrepidity to attack a bastion, or deliberately noose himself up in his garters.

The passion of the Europeans for magnificent interments is equally strong with that of the Chinese. When a tradesman dies, his frightful face is painted up by an undertaker, and placed in a proper situation to receive company; this is called lying in state. To this disagreeable spectacle all the idlers in town flock, and learn to loathe the wretch dead, whom they despised when living. In this manner you see some, who would have refused a shilling to save the life of their dearest friend, bestow thousands on adorning their putrid corpse. I have been told of a fellow who, grown rich by the price of blood, left it in his will that he should lie in state, and thus unknowingly gibbeted himself into infamy, when he might have otherwise quietly retired into oblivion.<sup>1</sup>

When the person is buried, the next care is to make his epitaph; they are generally reckoned best which flatter most; such relations, therefore, as have received most benefits from the defunct discharge this friendly office, and generally flatter in proportion to their joy. When we read those monumental histories of the dead, it may be justly said that "all

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<sup>1</sup> "Croker: Well, well, it's a good child, so say no more: but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you—old Ruggins, the curry-comb maker, lying in state; I am told he makes a very handsome corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously."—*The Good-Natured Man*, Act I.

men are equal in the dust;" for they all appear equally remarkable for being the most sincere Christians, the most benevolent neighbors, and the honestest men of their time. To go through a European cemetery, one would be apt to wonder how mankind could have so basely degenerated from such excellent ancestors. Every tomb pretends to claim your reverence and regret: some are praised for piety in those inscriptions, who never entered the temple until they were dead; some are praised for being excellent poets, who were never mentioned except for their dulness when living; others for sublime orators, who were never noted except for their impudence; and others still for military achievements, who were never in any other skirmishes but with the watch. Some even make epitaphs for themselves, and bespeak the reader's good-will. It were, indeed, to be wished that every man would early learn in this manner to make his own; that he would draw it up in terms as flattering as possible, and that he would make it the employment of his whole life to deserve it!

I have not yet been in a place called Westminster Abbey, but soon intend to visit it. There, I am told, I shall see justice done to deceased merit: none, I am told, are permitted to be buried there but such as have adorned as well as improved mankind. There no intruders, by the influence of friends or fortune, presume to mix their unhallowed ashes with philosophers, heroes, and poets. Nothing but true merit has a place in that awful sanctuary. The guardianship of the tombs is committed to several reverend priests, who are never guilty, for a superior reward, of taking down the names of good men to make room for others of equivocal character, nor ever profane the sacred walls with pageants that posterity cannot know, or shall blush to own.

I always was of opinion that sepulchral honors of this kind should be considered as a national concern, and not trusted to the care of the priests of any country, how respectable soever; but, from the conduct of the reverend personages whose disinterested patriotism I shall shortly be able to discover, I am taught to retract my former sentiments. It is

true, the Spartans and the Persians made a fine political use of sepulchral vanity; they permitted none to be thus interred who had not fallen in the vindication of their country. A monument thus became a real mark of distinction; it nerved the hero's arm with tenfold vigor, and he fought without fear who only fought for a grave. Farewell.

## LETTER XIII.

### A VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

*From the Same.*

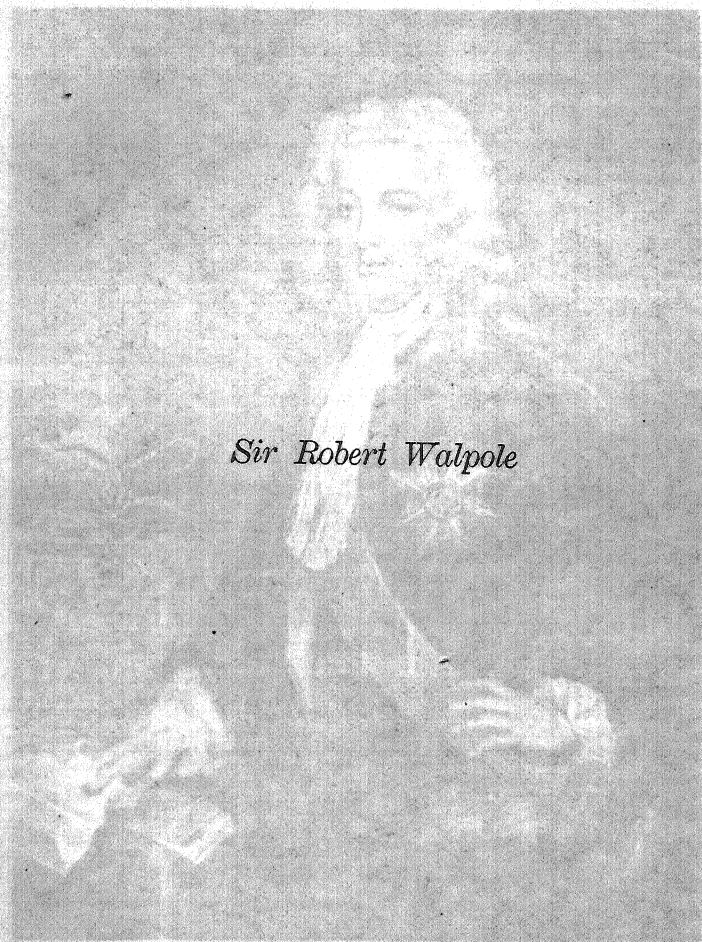
I AM just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think, then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple and threw my eyes round on the walls, filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all; they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the grave where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

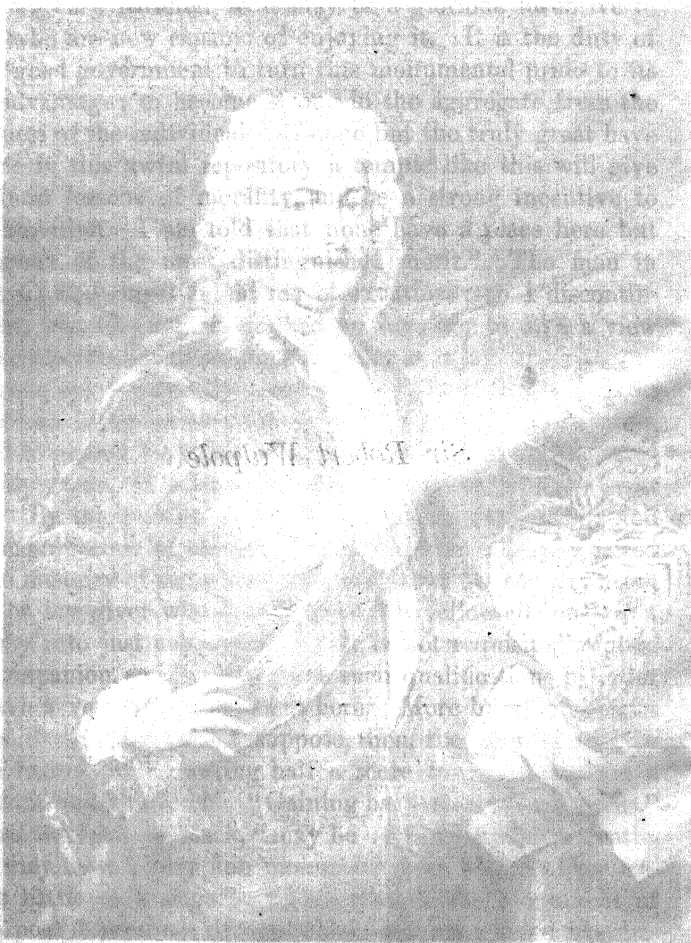
As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman, dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. "If any monument," said he, "should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavor to satisfy your demands." I accepted with thanks the gen-

tleman's offer, adding that "I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this," continued I, "be properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage; to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit." The man in black seemed impatient at my observations; so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

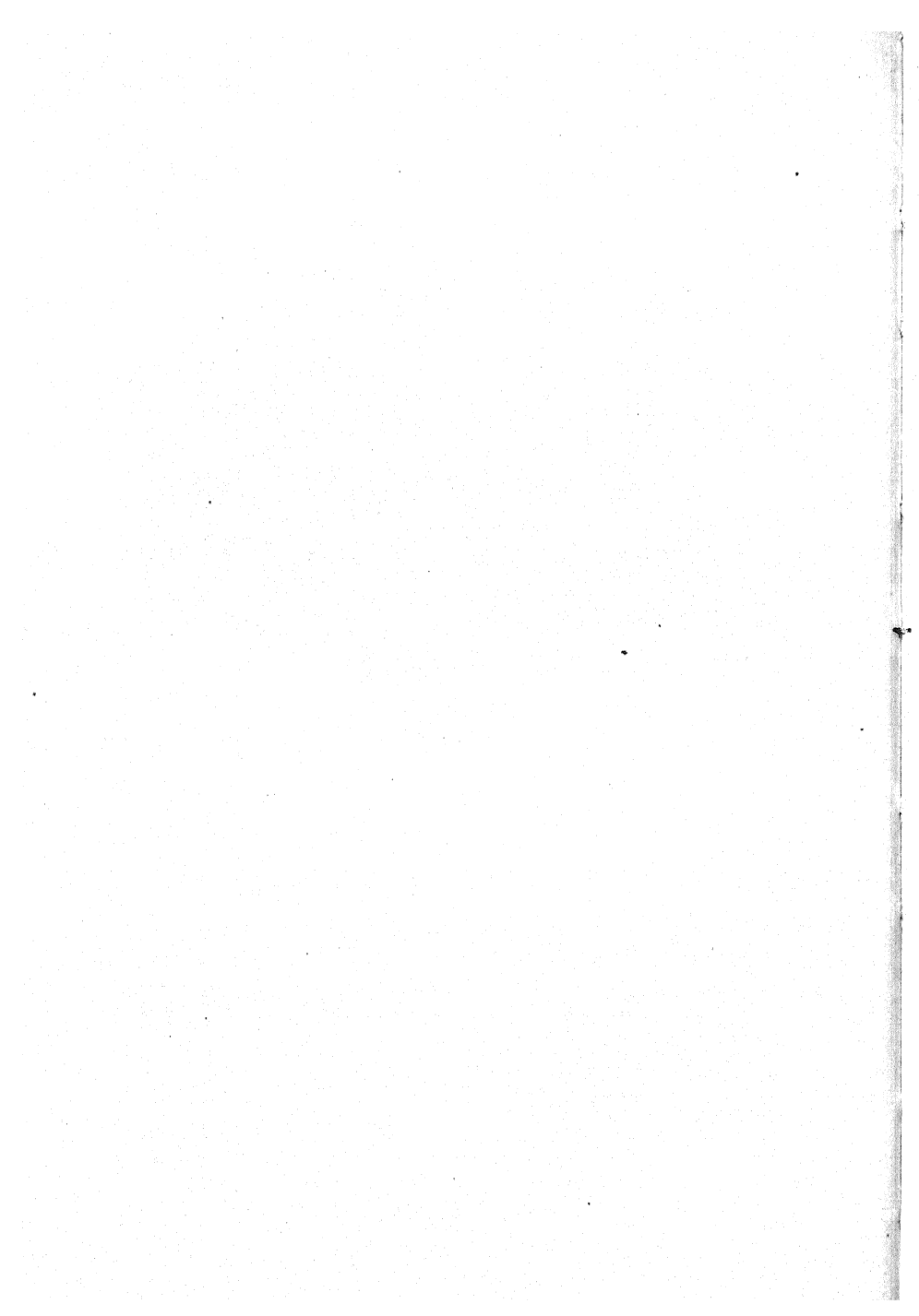
As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument, which appeared more beautiful than the rest. "That," said I to my guide, "I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or law-giver who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection." "It is not requisite," replied my companion, smiling, "to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice." "What! I suppose, then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?" "Gaining battles, or taking towns," replied the man in black, "may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege." "This, then, is the monument of some poet, I presume, of one whose wit has gained him immortality?" "No, sir," replied my guide, "the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others because he had none himself." "Pray, tell me then, in a word," said I, peevishly, "what is the great man



*Sir Robert Walpole*









who lies here particularly remarkable for?" "Remarkable, sir!" said my companion; "why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable—for a tomb in Westminster Abbey." "But, head of my ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company where even moderate merit would look like infamy?" "I suppose," replied the man in black, "the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one of the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great; there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here, fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead."

As we walked along to a particular part of the temple, "There," says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, "that is the Poets' Corner; there you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton." "Drayton!" I replied, "I never heard of him before;<sup>1</sup> but I have been told of one Pope; is he there?" "It is time enough," replied my guide, "these hundred years; he is not long dead; people have not done hating him yet." "Strange," cried I; "can any be found to hate a man whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow-creatures?" "Yes," says my guide, "they hate him for that very reason. There is a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Drayton, author of the "Poly-Olbion" (d. 1631). His monument in Westminster Abbey, erected at the expense of the famous Anne Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery, bears the well-known epitaph—

"Do, pious marble, let thy readers know  
What they, and what their children owe  
To Drayton's name," etc.—

generally attributed to Ben Jonson, though there is reason to believe that it was actually written by Quarles.

to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet; they somewhat resemble the eunuchs in a seraglio, who are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce, and Scribbler; to praise the dead, and revile the living; to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit; to applaud twenty blockheads, in order to gain the reputation of candor; and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently the bookseller himself<sup>1</sup> takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull. Every poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies; he feels, though he seems to despise, their malice; they make him miserable here, and, in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety.

"Has this been the case with every poet I see here?" cried I. "Yes, with every mother's son of them," replied he, "except he happened to be born a mandarin. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book-answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple."

"But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronize men of merit, and soften the rancor of malevolent dulness?" "I own there are many," replied the man in black; "but, alas, sir, the book-answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish; thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarin's table."

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass, in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person, who held the gate in his hand, told me I must pay first.<sup>2</sup> I was surprised at such a demand, and asked

<sup>1</sup> All this is aimed at Griffiths, the publisher and proprietor of the *Monthly Review*, and the review by Kenrick of Goldsmith's "Inquiry" in that publication.

<sup>2</sup> The passage from Poets' Corner to the western door was long a public thor-

the man whether the people of England kept a show? whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach? whether it was not more to the honor of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honor? "As for your questions," replied the gate-keeper, "to be sure they may be very right, because I don't understand them; but, as for that there threepence, I farm it from one—who rents it from another—who hires it from a third—who leases it from the guardians of the temple, and we all must live." I expected, upon paying here, to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise: but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armor, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax.<sup>1</sup> I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us, who, without once blushing, told a hundred lies; he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger;<sup>2</sup> of a king with a golden head,<sup>3</sup> and twenty such pieces of absurdity. "Look ye there, gentlemen," says he, pointing to an old oak chair, "there's a curiosity for ye! in that chair the kings of England were crowned; you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow." I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair or the stone; could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight; but in the present case there was no more reason for my surprise than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark

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oughfare. The Chinese had, therefore, seen the monuments in Poets' Corner without payment. This was not always the case.

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Albemarle, the Duchess of Richmond (La Belle Stuart), etc., long familiarly known as "The Ragged Regiment."

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Russell, in the chapel of St. Edmund.

<sup>3</sup> He means with a *silver* head. The head of the effigy of Henry V. was of silver.

walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he at last desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armor, which seemed to show nothing remarkable. "This armor," said he, "belonged to General Monk." "Very surprising that a general should wear armor!" "And pray," added he, "observe this cap: this is General Monk's cap." "Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have a cap also! Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally?" "That, sir," says he, "I don't know; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble." "A very small recompense truly," said I. "Not so very small," replied he, "for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money." "What, more money! still more money!" "Every gentleman gives something, sir." "I'll give thee nothing," returned I; "the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure, the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Show me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars."

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean, in the occurrences of the day.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "JOHNSON: 'I remember once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poets' Corner I said to him,

"Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis."

When we got to Temple Bar he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slyly whispered me,

"Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis."'"

BOSWELL, by Croker, p. 258.

## LETTER XIV.

THE RECEPTION OF THE CHINESE FROM A LADY OF DISTINCTION.

*From the Same.*

I WAS some days ago agreeably surprised by a message from a lady of distinction, who sent me word that she most passionately desired the pleasure of my acquaintance; and, with the utmost impatience, expected an interview. I will not deny, my dear Fum Hoam, but that my vanity was raised at such an invitation. I flattered myself that she had seen me in some public place, and had conceived an affection for my person, which thus induced her to deviate from the usual decorums of the sex. My imagination painted her in all the bloom of youth and beauty. I fancied her attended by the loves and graces; and I set out with the most pleasing expectations of seeing the conquest I had made.

When I was introduced into her apartment my expectations were quickly at an end; I perceived a little shrivelled figure indolently reclined on a sofa, who nodded by way of approbation at my approach. This, as I was afterwards informed, was the lady herself, a woman equally distinguished for rank, politeness, taste, and understanding. As I was dressed after the fashion of Europe, she had taken me for an Englishman, and consequently saluted me in her ordinary manner; but when the footman informed her Grace that I was the gentleman from China, she instantly lifted herself from the couch, while her eyes sparkled with unusual vivacity. "Bless me! can this be the gentleman that was born so far from home? What an unusual share of *somethingness* in his whole appearance! Lord, how I am charmed with the outlandish cut of his face! how bewitching the exotic breadth of his forehead! I would give the world to see him in his own country dress. Pray turn about, sir, and let me see you

behind. There! there's a travelled air for you. You that attend there, bring up a plate of beef cut into small pieces: I have a violent passion to see him eat. Pray, sir, have you got your chopsticks about you?<sup>1</sup> It will be so pretty to see the meat carried to the mouth with a jerk. Pray speak a little Chinese: I have learned some of the language myself. Lord! have you nothing pretty from China about you; something that one does not know what to do with? I have got twenty things from China that are of no use in the world. Look at those jars, they are of the right pea-green; these are the furniture." "Dear madam," said I, "these, though they may appear fine in your eyes, are but paltry to a Chinese; but, as they are useful utensils, it is proper they should have a place in every apartment." "Useful, sir!" replied the lady; "sure you mistake; they are of no use in the world."—"What! are they not filled with an infusion of tea as in China?" replied I. "Quite empty and useless, upon my honor, sir." "Then they are the most cumbrous and clumsy furniture in the world, as nothing is truly elegant but what unites use with beauty." "I protest," says the lady, "I shall begin to suspect thee of being an actual barbarian. I suppose you hold my two beautiful pagods in contempt?" "What!" cried I, "has Fohi spread his gross superstitions here also? Pagods of all kinds are my aversion." "A Chinese, a traveller, and want taste! it surprises me. Pray, sir, examine the beauties of that Chinese temple which you see at the end of the garden. Is there anything in China more beautiful?" "Where I stand I see nothing, madam, at the end of the garden, that may not as well be called an Egyptian pyramid as a Chinese temple; for that little building in view is as like the one as t'other." "What, sir! is not that a Chinese temple? you must surely be mistaken. Mr. Freeze, who designed it, calls it one, and nobody disputes his pretensions to taste." I now found it vain to contradict the lady in anything she thought fit to advance; so was resolved rather to act the disciple than the in-

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<sup>1</sup> Two slender sticks, or porcupine quills, by the means of which, placed between the thumb and the two first fingers of the right hand, the Chinese throw their food, with great expedition, into their mouths.

structor. She took me through several rooms all furnished, as she told me, in the Chinese manner; sprawling dragons, squatting pagods, and clumsy mandarins were stuck upon every shelf: in turning round, one must have used caution not to demolish a part of the precarious furniture.

In a house like this, thought I, one must live continually upon the watch; the inhabitant must resemble a knight in an enchanted castle, who expects to meet an adventure at every turning. "But, madam," said I, "do no accidents ever happen to all this finery?" "Man, sir," replied the lady, "is born to misfortunes, and it is but fit I should have a share. Three weeks ago, a careless servant snapped off the head of a favorite mandarin. I had scarce done grieving for that, when a monkey broke a beautiful jar; this I took the more to heart, as the injury was done me by a friend. However, I survived the calamity—when yesterday crash went half a dozen dragons upon the marble hearth-stone; and yet I live; I survive it all: you can't conceive what comfort I find under afflictions from philosophy. There is Seneca, and Bolingbroke, and some others, who guide me through life, and teach me to support its calamities." I could not but smile at a woman who makes her own misfortunes, and then deplores the miseries of her situation. Wherefore, tired of acting with dissimulation, and willing to indulge my meditations in solitude, I took leave just as the servant was bringing in a plate of beef, pursuant to the directions of his mistress. Adieu.

## LETTER XV.

AGAINST CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.—A STORY FROM THE ZEND-  
AVESTA OF ZOROASTER.

*From the Same.*

THE better sort here pretend to the utmost compassion for animals of every kind: to hear them speak, a stranger would be apt to imagine they could hardly hurt the gnat that stung them; they seem so tender, and so full of pity, that one would

take them for the harmless friends of the whole creation, the protectors of the meanest insect or reptile that was privileged with existence. And yet (would you believe it?) I have seen the very men who have thus boasted of their tenderness at the same time devouring the flesh of six different animals tossed up in a fricasee. Strange contrariety of conduct: they pity, and they eat the objects of their compassion! The lion roars with terror over its captive; the tiger sends forth its hideous shriek to intimidate its prey; no creature shows any fondness for its short-lived prisoner, except a man and a cat.

Man was born to live with innocence and simplicity, but he has deviated from nature; he was born to share the bounties of Heaven, but he has monopolized them; he was born to govern the brute creation, but he is become their tyrant. If an epicure now should happen to surfeit on his last night's feast, twenty animals the next day are to undergo the most exquisite tortures, in order to provoke his appetite to another guilty meal. Hail, O ye simple, honest Brahmins of the East; ye inoffensive friends of all that were born to happiness as well as you; you never sought a short-lived pleasure from the miseries of other creatures! You never studied the tormenting arts of ingenious refinement; you never surfeited upon a guilty meal! How much more purified and refined are all your sensations than ours! you distinguish every element with the utmost precision; a stream untasted before is a new luxury, a change of air is a new banquet, too refined for Western imaginations to conceive.

Though the Europeans do not hold the transmigration of souls, yet one of their doctors has, with great force of argument and great plausibility of reasoning, endeavored to prove that the bodies of animals are the habitations of demons and wicked spirits, which are obliged to reside in these prisons till the resurrection pronounces their everlasting punishment; but are previously condemned to suffer all the pains and hardships inflicted upon them by man, or by each other, here. If this be the case, it may frequently happen that, while we whip pigs to death or boil live lobsters, we are putting some old



acquaintance, some near relation, to excruciating tortures, and are serving him up to the very same table where he was once the most welcome companion.

"Kabul," says the Zend-Avesta,<sup>1</sup> "was born on the rushy banks of the river Mawra: his possessions were great, and his luxuries kept pace with the affluence of his fortune; he hated the harmless Brahmins, and despised their holy religion; every day his table was decked out with the flesh of a hundred different animals, and his cooks had a hundred different ways of dressing it, to solicit even satiety.

"Notwithstanding all his eating, he did not arrive at old age; he died of a surfeit caused by intemperance. Upon this, his soul was carried off, in order to take its trial before a select assembly of the souls of those animals which his gluttony had caused to be slain, and who were now appointed his judges.

"He trembled before a tribunal to every member of which he had formerly acted as an unmerciful tyrant: he sought for pity, but found none disposed to grant it. 'Does he not remember,' cries the angry boar, 'to what agonies I was put, not to satisfy his hunger, but his vanity? I was first hunted to death, and my flesh scarce thought worthy of coming once to his table. Were my advice followed, he should do penance in the shape of a hog, which in life he most resembled.'

"'I am rather,' cries a sheep upon the bench, 'for having him suffer under the appearance of a lamb; we may then send him through four or five transmigrations in the space of a month.' 'Were my voice of any weight in the assembly,' cries a calf, 'he should rather assume such a form as mine; I was bled every day, in order to make my flesh white, and at last killed without mercy.' 'Would it not be wiser,' cries a hen, 'to cram him in the shape of a fowl, and then smother him in his own blood, as I was served?' The majority of the assembly were pleased with this punishment, and were going to condemn him without further delay, when the ox rose up to give his

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the sacred books which the descendants of the ancient Persians assert that they received, more than four thousand years ago, from Zoroaster, or Zerdusht.

opinion. 'I am informed,' says this counsellor, 'that the prisoner at the bar has left a wife with child behind him. By my knowledge in divination, I foresee that this child will be a son, decrepit, feeble, sickly, a plague to himself and all about him. What say you, then, my companions, if we condemn the father to animate the body of his own son, and by this means make him feel in himself those miseries his intemperance must otherwise have entailed upon his posterity?' The whole court applauded the ingenuity of his torture; they thanked him for his advice. Kabul was driven once more to revisit the earth; and his soul, in the body of his own son, passed a period of thirty years loaded with misery, anxiety, and disease."

## LETTER XVI.

OF FALSEHOOD PROPAGATED BY BOOKS SEEMINGLY SINCERE.

*From the Same.*

I KNOW not whether I am more obliged to the Chinese missionaries for the instruction I have received from them, or prejudiced by the falsehoods they have made me believe. By them I was told that the Pope was universally allowed to be a man, and placed at the head of the Church; in England, however, they plainly prove him to be a whore in man's clothes, and often burn him in effigy as an impostor. A thousand books have been written on either side of the question; priests are eternally disputing against each other; and those mouths that want argument are filled with abuse. Which party must I believe, or shall I give credit to neither? When I survey the absurdities and falsehoods with which the books of the Europeans are filled, I thank Heaven for having been born in China, and that I have sagacity enough to detect imposture.

The Europeans reproach us with false history and fabulous chronology; how should they blush to see their own books, many of which are written by the doctors of their religion,

filled with the most monstrous fables, and attested with the utmost solemnity. The bounds of a letter do not permit me to mention all the absurdities of this kind which in my reading I have met with. I shall confine myself to the accounts which some of their lettered men give of the persons of some of the inhabitants on our globe; and not satisfied with the most solemn asseverations, they sometimes pretend to have been eye-witnesses of what they describe.

A Christian doctor, in one of his principal performances,<sup>1</sup> says that it was not impossible for a whole nation to have but one eye in the middle of the forehead. He is not satisfied with leaving it in doubt; but in another work<sup>2</sup> assures us that the fact was certain, and that he himself was an eye-witness of it. "When," says he, "I took a journey into Ethiopia, in company with several other servants of Christ, in order to preach the Gospel there, I beheld, in the southern provinces of that country, a nation which had only one eye in the midst of their foreheads."

You will no doubt be surprised, reverend Fum, with this author's effrontery; but, alas, he is not alone in this story; he has only borrowed it from several others who wrote before him. Solinus creates another nation of Cyclops, the Arimaspians, who inhabit those countries that border on the Caspian Sea. This author goes on to tell us of a people of India, who have but one leg and one eye, and yet are extremely active, run with great swiftness, and live by hunting. These people we scarce know how to pity or admire; but the men whom Pliny calls Cynamolci, who have got the heads of dogs, really deserve our compassion; instead of language, they express their sentiments by barking. Solinus confirms what Pliny mentions; and Simon Mayole, a French bishop,<sup>3</sup> talks of them as of particular and familiar acquaintances. "After passing the deserts of Egypt," says he, "we meet with the Kunocephaloi, who inhabit those regions that border

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<sup>1</sup> Augustin. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvi. p. 422.—GOLDSMITH.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ad fratres in Eremito. Serm. xxxvii.—GOLDSMITH.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Maiolo was an Italian, and bishop of Volturara. He was born at Asti in 1520, and died in 1597.

on Ethiopia; they live by hunting; they cannot speak, but whistle; their chins resemble a serpent's head; their hands are armed with long sharp claws; their breast resembles that of a greyhound; and they excel in swiftness and agility." Would you think it, my friend, that these odd kind of people are, notwithstanding their figure, excessively delicate? Not even an alderman's wife, or Chinese mandarin, can excel them in this particular. "These people," continues our faithful bishop, "never refuse wine; love roast and boiled meat; they are particularly curious in having their meat well dressed, and spurn at it if in the least tainted. When the Ptolemies reigned in Egypt," says he, a little farther on, "those men with dogs' heads taught grammar and music." For men who had no voices to teach music, and who could not speak, to teach grammar is, I confess, a little extraordinary. Did ever the disciples of Fohi broach anything more ridiculous?

Hitherto we have seen men with heads strangely deformed and with dogs' heads; but what would you say if you heard of men without any heads at all? Pomponius Mela, Solinus, and Aulus Gellius describe them to our hand: "The Blemiæ have a nose, eyes, and mouth on their breasts; or, as others will have it, placed on their shoulders."

One would think that these authors had an antipathy to the human form, and were resolved to make a new figure of their own; but let us do them justice. Though they sometimes deprive us of a leg, an arm, a head, or some such trifling part of the body, they often as liberally bestow upon us something that we wanted before. Simon Mayole seems our particular friend in this respect: if he has denied heads to one part of mankind, he has given tails to another. He describes many of the English of his time, which is more than a hundred years ago, as having tails. His own words are as follows: "In England there are some families which have tails, as a punishment for deriding an Augustin friar sent by St. Greg-

<sup>1</sup> This is a mistake. Maiolo's "*Dies Caniculares*," etc., was published at Rome, in 1576. A translation, by Rosset, appeared at Paris in 1643, with this title, "*Les Jours Caniculaire; c'est à dire, vingt-trois excellents Discours des Choses Naturelles et Surnaturelles.*"

ory, and who preached in Dorsetshire. They sewed the tails of different animals to his clothes; but soon they found those tails entailed on them and their posterity forever." It is certain that the author had some ground for this description. Many of the English wear tails to their wigs to this very day, as a mark, I suppose, of the antiquity of their families, and perhaps as a symbol of those tails with which they were formerly distinguished by nature.<sup>1</sup>

You see, my friend, there is nothing so ridiculous that has not at some time been said by some philosopher. The writers of books in Europe seem to think themselves authorized to say what they please; and an ingenious philosopher among them<sup>2</sup> has openly asserted that he would undertake to persuade the whole republic of readers to believe that the sun was neither the cause of light nor heat, if he could only get six philosophers on his side. Farewell.

## LETTER XVII.

OF THE WAR NOW CARRIED ON BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND, WITH ITS FRIVOLOUS MOTIVES.

*From the Same.*

WERE an Asiatic politician to read the treaties of peace and friendship that have been annually making for more than a hundred years among the inhabitants of Europe, he would probably be surprised how it should ever happen that Christian princes could quarrel among each other. Their compacts for peace are drawn up with the utmost precision, and ratified with the greatest solemnity; to these each party promises a

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<sup>1</sup> Little did Goldsmith imagine that, within ten years of the period at which he was writing, not, indeed, an Italian bishop, but a grave Scotch judge would step forward to maintain that orang-outangs are of the human species, and that even in the Bay of Bengal there exists a whole nation of men with tails. See MONBODDO, *Orig. of Language*, vol. i. lib. ii. ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Fontenelle.—GOLDSMITH.

sincere and inviolable obedience, and all wears the appearance of open friendship and unreserved reconciliation.

Yet, notwithstanding those treaties, the people of Europe are almost continually at war. There is nothing more easy than to break a treaty ratified in all the usual forms, and yet neither party be the aggressor. One side, for instance, breaks a trifling article by mistake; the opposite party, upon this, makes a small but premeditated reprisal; this brings on a return of greater from the other; both sides complain of injuries and infractions; war is declared; they beat; are beaten; some two or three hundred thousand men are killed; they grow tired; leave off just where they began; and so sit coolly down to make new treaties.<sup>1</sup>

The English and French seem to place themselves foremost among the champion states of Europe. Though parted by a narrow sea, yet are they entirely of opposite characters; and from their vicinity are taught to fear and admire each other. They are at present engaged in a very destructive war, have already spilled much blood, are excessively irritated, and all upon account of one side's desiring to wear greater quantities of *furs* than the other.

The pretext of the war is about some lands a thousand leagues off—a country cold, desolate, and hideous; a country belonging to a people who were in possession from time immemorial. The savages of Canada claim a property in the country in dispute; they have all the pretensions which long possession can confer. Here they had reigned for ages without rivals in dominion, and knew no enemies but the prowling bear or insidious tiger; their native forests produced all the

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<sup>1</sup> "But what most show'd the vanity of life,  
Was to behold the nations all on fire,  
In cruel broils engag'd, and deadly strife:  
Most Christian kings inflam'd by black desire,  
With honorable ruffians in their hire,  
Cause war to rage, and blood around to pour;  
Of this sad work when each begins to tire,  
*They sit them down just where they were before,*  
*Till for new scenes of woe peace shall their force restore."*

THOMSON, *Castle of Indolence*.

necessaries of life, and they found ample luxury in the enjoyment. In this manner they might have continued to live to eternity, had not the English been informed that those countries produced furs in great abundance. From that moment the country became an object of desire: it was found that furs were things very much wanted in England; the ladies edged some of their clothes with furs, and muffs were worn both by gentlemen and ladies. In short, furs were found indispensably necessary for the happiness of the state; and the king was consequently petitioned to grant, not only the country of Canada, but all the savages belonging to it, to the subjects of England, in order to have the people supplied with proper quantities of this necessary commodity.

So very reasonable a request was immediately complied with, and large colonies were sent abroad to procure furs, and take possession. The French, who were equally in want of furs (for they were as fond of muffs and tippetts as the English), made the very same request to their monarch, and met with the same gracious reception from their king, who generously granted what was not his to give. Wherever the French landed they called the country their own; and the English took possession, wherever they came, upon the same equitable pretensions. The harmless savages made no opposition; and, could the intruders have agreed together, they might peaceably have shared this desolate country between them. But they quarrelled about the boundaries of their settlements, about grounds and rivers to which neither side could show any other right than that of power, and which neither could occupy but by usurpation. Such is the contest, that no honest man can heartily wish success to either party.

The war has continued for some time with various success. At first the French seemed victorious, but the English have of late dispossessed them of the whole country in dispute. Think not, however, that success on one side is the harbinger of peace; on the contrary, both parties must be heartily tired to effect even a temporary reconciliation. It should seem the business of the victorious party to offer terms of peace; but

there are many in England who, encouraged by success, are for still protracting the war.

The best English politicians, however, are sensible that to keep their present conquests would be rather a burden than an advantage to them ; rather a diminution of their strength than an increase of power. It is in the politic as in the human constitution : if the limbs grow too large for the body, their size, instead of improving, will diminish the vigor of the whole. The colonies should always bear an exact proportion to the mother country ; when they grow populous they grow powerful, and by becoming powerful they become independent also. Thus, subordination is destroyed, and a country swallowed up in the extent of its own dominions. The Turkish empire would be more formidable were it less extensive, were it not for those countries which it can neither command nor give entirely away ; which it is obliged to protect, but from which it has no power to exact obedience.

Yet, obvious as these truths are, there are many Englishmen who are for transplanting new colonies into this late acquisition, for peopling the deserts of America with the refuse of their countrymen, and (as they express it) with the waste of an exuberant nation. But who are those unhappy creatures who are to be thus drained away ? Not the sickly, for they are unwelcome guests abroad as well as at home ; nor the idle, for they would starve as well behind the Appalachian mountains as in the streets of London. This refuse is composed of the laborious and enterprising, of such men as can be serviceable to their country at home ; of men who ought to be regarded as the sinews of the people, and cherished with every degree of political indulgence. And what are the commodities which this colony, when established, is to produce in return ? Why, raw silk, hemp, and tobacco. England, therefore, must make an exchange of her best and bravest subjects for raw silk, hemp, and tobacco ; her hardy veterans and honest tradesmen must be trucked for a box of snuff or a silk petticoat. Strange absurdity ! Surely the politics of the Daures are not more strange, who sell their religion, their wives, and their liberty for a glass bead or a paltry penknife. Farewell.



## LETTER XVIII.

### THE STORY OF THE CHINESE MATRON.<sup>1</sup>

*From the Same.*

THE English love their wives with much passion, the Hollanders with much prudence; the English, when they give their hands, frequently give their hearts; the Dutch give the hand, but keep the heart wisely in their own possession. The English love with violence, and expect violent love in return; the Dutch are satisfied with the slightest acknowledgment, for they give little away. The English expend many of the matrimonial comforts in the first year; the Dutch frugally husband out their pleasures, and are always constant because they are always indifferent.

There seems very little difference between a Dutch bridegroom and a Dutch husband. Both are equally possessed of the same cool unexpecting serenity; they can see neither elysium nor paradise behind the curtain; and Yiffrow is not more a goddess on the wedding-night than after twenty years' matrimonial acquaintance. On the other hand, many of the English marry in order to have one happy month in their lives: they seem incapable of looking beyond that period; they unite in hopes of finding rapture, and, disappointed in that, disdain ever to accept of happiness. From hence we see open hatred ensue; or what is worse, concealed disgust under the appearance of fulsome endearment. Much formality, great civility, and studied compliments are exhibited in public; cross looks, sulky silence, or open recrimination fill up their hours of private entertainment.

Hence I am taught, whenever I see a new-married couple

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<sup>1</sup> The agreeable little story of which Goldsmith has here given an abridgment was translated from the Chinese into French by Père Dentrecolles, superintendent-general of the French missionaries in China, who died at Pekin in 1741.

more than ordinarily fond before faces, to consider them as attempting to impose upon the company or themselves; either hating each other heartily, or consuming that stock of love in the beginning of their course which should serve them through their whole journey. Neither side should expect those instances of kindness which are inconsistent with true freedom or happiness to bestow. Love, when founded in the heart, will show itself in a thousand unpremeditated sallies of fondness; but every cool, deliberate exhibition of the passion only argues little understanding, or great insincerity.

Choang was the fondest husband and Hansi the most endearing wife in all the kingdom of Korea: they were a pattern of conjugal bliss; the inhabitants of the country around saw and envied their felicity; wherever Choang came, Hansi was sure to follow; and in all the pleasures of Hansi, Choang was admitted a partner. They walked hand-in-hand wherever they appeared, showing every mark of mutual satisfaction; embracing, kissing, their mouths were forever joined, and, to speak in the language of anatomy, it was with them one perpetual anastomosis.

Their love was so great that it was thought nothing could interrupt their mutual peace; when an accident happened which, in some measure, diminished the husband's assurance of his wife's fidelity; for love so refined as his was subject to a thousand little disquietudes.

Happening to go one day alone among the tombs that lay at some distance from his house, he there perceived a lady dressed in the deepest mourning (being clothed all over in white<sup>1</sup>), fanning the wet clay that was raised over one of the graves with a large fan, which she held in her hand. Choang, who had early been taught wisdom in the school of Lao, was unable to assign a cause for her present employment, and coming up, civilly demanded the reason. "Alas," replied the lady, her eyes bathed in tears, "how is it possible to survive the loss of my husband, who lies buried in this grave! He

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<sup>1</sup> "The mourning for the nearest relations in the first degree shall be worn for three years, and shall be made of the coarsest white cloth, without being sewed at the borders."—STAUNTON, *Laws of China*, p. 75.

was the best of men, the tenderest of husbands; with his dying breath he bid me never marry again' till the earth over his grave should be dry; and here you see me steadily resolving to obey his will, and endeavoring to dry it with my fan. I have employed two whole days in fulfilling his commands, and am determined not to marry till they are punctually obeyed, even though his grave should take up four days in drying."

Choang, who was struck with the widow's beauty, could not, however, avoid smiling at her haste to be married; but concealing the cause of his mirth, civilly invited her home, adding that he had a wife who might be capable of giving her some consolation. As soon as he and his guest were returned he imparted to Hansi in private what he had seen, and could not avoid expressing his uneasiness that such might be his own case, if his dearest wife should one day happen to survive him.

It is impossible to describe Hansi's resentment at so unkind a suspicion. As her passion for him was not only great, but extremely delicate, she employed tears, anger, frowns, and exclamations, to chide his suspicions; the widow herself was inveighed against; and Hansi declared she was resolved never to sleep under the same roof with a wretch who, like her, could be guilty of such barefaced inconstancy. The night was cold and stormy; however, the stranger was obliged to seek another lodging, for Choang was not disposed to resist, and Hansi would have her way.

The widow had scarce been gone an hour, when an old disciple of Choang's, whom he had not seen for many years, came to pay him a visit. He was received with the utmost ceremony, placed in the most honorable seat at supper, and the wine began to circulate with great freedom. Choang and Hansi exhibited open marks of mutual tenderness and unfeigned reconciliation; nothing could equal their apparent happiness; so fond a husband, so obedient a wife, few could

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<sup>1</sup> In China second marriages are rare on the part of women, and reflect some discredit on the widows.



behold without regretting their own infelicity. When, lo! their happiness was at once disturbed by a most fatal accident. Choang fell lifeless in an apoplectic fit upon the floor. Every method was used, but in vain, for his recovery. Hansi was at first inconsolable for his death; after some hours, however, she found spirits to read his last will. The ensuing day she began to moralize and talk wisdom; the next day she was able to comfort the young disciple; and on the third, to shorten a long story, they both agreed to be married.

There was now no longer mourning in the apartments; the body of Choang was now thrust into an old coffin, and placed in one of the meanest rooms, there to lie unattended until the time prescribed by law for his interment. In the mean time Hansi and the young disciple were arrayed in the most magnificent habits; the bride wore in her nose a jewel of immense price, and her lover was dressed in all the finery of his former master, together with a pair of artificial whiskers that reached down to his toes. The hour of their nuptials was arrived; the whole family sympathized with their approaching happiness; the apartments were brightened up with lights that diffused the most exquisite perfume, and a lustre more bright than noonday. The lady expected her youthful lover in an inner apartment with impatience; when his servant, approaching with terror in his countenance, informed her, that his master was fallen into a fit, which would certainly be mortal, unless the heart of a man lately dead could be obtained, and applied to his breast. She scarcely waited to hear the end of his story, when, tucking up her clothes, she ran with a mattock in her hand to the coffin where Choang lay, resolving to apply the heart of her dead husband as a cure for the living. She therefore struck the lid with the utmost violence. In a few blows the coffin flew open, when the body, which to all appearance had been dead, began to move. Terrified at the sight, Hansi dropped the mattock, and Choang walked out, astonished at his own situation, his wife's unusual magnificence, and her more amazing surprise. He went among the apartments, unable to conceive the cause of so much splendor. He was not long in suspense

before his domestics informed him of every transaction since he first became insensible. He could scarcely believe what they told him, and went in pursuit of Hansi herself in order to receive more certain information, or to reproach her infidelity. But she prevented his reproaches; he found her weltering in blood; for she had stabbed herself to the heart, being unable to survive her shame and disappointment.

Choang, being a philosopher, was too wise to make any loud lamentations: he thought it best to bear his loss with serenity; so, mending up the old coffin where he had lain himself, he placed his faithless spouse in his room; and unwilling that so many nuptial preparations should be expended in vain, he the same night married the widow with the large fan.

As they both were apprised of the foibles of each other beforehand, they knew how to excuse them after marriage. They lived together for many years in great tranquillity, and not expecting rapture, made a shift to find contentment. Farewell.

## LETTER XIX.

THE ENGLISH METHOD OF TREATING WOMEN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY.—THE RUSSIAN METHOD.

*To the Same.*

THE gentleman dressed in black, who was my companion through Westminster Abbey, came yesterday to pay me a visit; and after drinking tea we both resolved to take a walk together, in order to enjoy the freshness of the country, which now begins to resume its verdure. Before we got out of the suburbs, however, we were stopped in one of the streets by a crowd of people, gathered in a circle round a man and his wife, who seemed too loud and too angry to be understood. The people were highly pleased with the dispute, which upon inquiry we found to be between Dr. Cacafogo, an apothecary, and his wife. The doctor, it seems, coming unexpectedly into his wife's apartment, found a gentleman there, in circumstances not in the least equivocal.

The doctor, who was a person of nice honor, resolving to revenge the flagrant insult, immediately flew to the chimney-piece, and taking down a rusty blunderbuss, drew the trigger upon the defiler of his bed: the delinquent would certainly have been shot through the head, but that the piece had not been charged for many years. The gallant made a shift to escape through the window, but the lady still remained; and, as she well knew her husband's temper, undertook to manage the quarrel without a second. He was furious, and she loud; their noise had gathered all the mob who charitably assembled on the occasion, not to prevent, but to enjoy the quarrel.

"Alas!" said I to my companion, "what will become of this unhappy creature thus caught in adultery? Believe me, I pity her from my heart; her husband, I suppose, will show her no mercy. Will they burn her as in India, or behead her as in Persia? Will they load her with stripes as in Turkey, or keep her in perpetual imprisonment as with us in China?"<sup>1</sup> Prithee, what is the wife's punishment in England for such offences?" "When a lady is thus caught tripping," replied my companion, "they never punish her, but the husband." "You surely jest," interrupted I; "I am a foreigner, and you would abuse my ignorance!" "I am really serious," returned he; "Dr. Cacafoogo has caught his wife in the act; but, as he had no witnesses, his small testimony goes for nothing; the consequence, therefore, of his discovery will be, that she will be packed off to live among her relations, and the doctor must be obliged to allow her a separate maintenance." "Amazing!" cried I; "is it not enough that she is permitted to live separate from the object she detests, but must he give her money to keep her in spirits too?" "That he must," said my guide, "and be called a cuckold by all his neighbors into the bargain. The men will laugh at him, the ladies will pity him; and all that his warmest friends can say in his favor will be, that 'the poor good soul has never had any harm in him.'" "I want patience," interrupted I; "what! are there no private chastise-

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<sup>1</sup> In China women can never be imprisoned except for capital offences, or for adultery.

ments for the wife; no schools of penitence to show her her folly; no blows for such delinquents?"<sup>1</sup> "Pshaw, man," replied he, smiling, "if every delinquent among us were to be treated in your manner, one-half of the kingdom would flog the other."

I must confess, my dear Fum, that if I were an English husband, of all things I would take care not to be jealous, nor busily pry into those secrets my wife was pleased to keep from me. Should I detect her infidelity, what is the consequence? If I calmly pocket the abuse, I am laughed at by her and her gallant; if I talk my griefs aloud like a tragedy hero, I am laughed at by the whole world. The course then I would take would be, whenever I went out, to tell my wife where I was going, lest I should unexpectedly meet her abroad in company with some dear deceiver. Whenever I returned, I would use a peculiar rap at the door, and give four loud hems as I walked deliberately up the staircase. I would never inquisitively peep under her bed, or look behind the curtains. And even though I knew the captain was there, I would calmly take a dish of my wife's cool tea, and talk of the army with reverence.

Of all nations the Russians seem to me to behave most wisely in such circumstances. The wife promises her husband never to let him see her transgressions of this nature; and he as punctually promises, whenever she is so detected, without the least anger, to beat her without mercy; so they both know what each has to expect; the lady transgresses, is beaten, taken again into favor, and all goes on as before.

When a Russian young lady, therefore, is to be married, her father, with a cudgel in his hand, asks the bridegroom whether he chooses this virgin for his bride; to which the other replies in the affirmative. Upon this, the father, turning the lady three times round, and giving her three strokes with his cudgel on the back—"My dear," cries he, "these are the last blows you are ever to receive from your tender father; I re-

<sup>1</sup> "Criminal intercourse with a married woman shall be punished with eighty blows; deliberate intrigue with a married or unmarried woman shall be punished with one hundred blows."—STAUNTON, *Laws of China*, p. 404.

sign my authority and my cudgel to your husband; he knows better than I the use of either." The bridegroom knows decorums too well to accept of the cudgel abruptly; he assures the father that the lady will never want it, and that he would not, for the world, make any use of it. But the father, who knows what the lady may want better than he, insists upon his acceptance; upon this there follows a scene of Russian politeness, while one refuses, and the other offers the cudgel. The whole, however, ends with the bridegroom's taking it; upon which the lady drops a courtesy in token of obedience, and the ceremony proceeds as usual.

There is something excessively fair and open in this method of courtship; by this both sides are prepared for all the matrimonial adventures that are to follow. Marriage has been compared to a game of skill for life: it is generous thus in both parties to declare they are sharpers in the beginning. In England, I am told, both sides use every art to conceal their defects from each other before marriage, and the rest of their lives may be regarded as doing penance for their former dissimulation. Farewell.

## LETTER XX.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS IN ENGLAND.

*From the Same.*

THE Republic of Letters is a very common expression among the Europeans; and yet when applied to the learned of Europe is the most absurd that can be imagined, since nothing is more unlike a republic than the society which goes by that name. From this expression one would be apt to imagine that the learned were united into a single body, joining their interests and concurring in the same design. From this, one might be apt to compare them to our literary societies in China, where each acknowledges a just subordination, and all contribute to build the temple of science, with-



out attempting, from ignorance or envy, to obstruct each other.

But very different is the state of learning here; every member of this fancied republic is desirous of governing, and none willing to obey; each looks upon his fellow as a rival, not an assistant, in the same pursuit. They calumniate, they injure, they despise, they ridicule each other; if one man writes a book that pleases, others shall write books to show that he might have given still greater pleasure, or should not have pleased. If one happens to hit upon something new, there are numbers ready to assure the public that all this was no novelty to them or the learned; that Cardanus, or Brunus, or some other author too dull to be generally read, had anticipated the discovery. Thus, instead of uniting like the members of a commonwealth, they are divided into almost as many factions as there are men; and their jarring constitution, instead of being styled a republic of letters, should be entitled an anarchy of literature.

It is true there are some of superior abilities who reverence and esteem each other; but their mutual admiration is not sufficient to shield off the contempt of the crowd. The wise are but few, and they praise with a feeble voice; the vulgar are many, and roar in reproaches. The truly great seldom unite in societies; have few meetings, no cabals; the dunces hunt in full cry till they have run down a reputation, and then snarl and fight with each other about dividing the spoil. Here you may see the compilers and the book-answerers of every month, when they have cut up some respectable name, most frequently reproaching each other with stupidity and dulness; resembling the wolves of the Russian forest, who prey upon venison or horse-flesh when they can get it, but in cases of necessity lying in wait to devour each other. While they have new books to cut up they make a hearty meal; but if this resource should unhappily fail, then it is that critics eat up critics, and compilers rob from compilations.

Confucius observes that it is the duty of the learned to unite society more closely, and to persuade men to become citizens of the world; but the authors I refer to are not only

for disuniting society but kingdoms also : if the English are at war with France, the dunces of France think it their duty to be at war with those of England. Thus Fréron, one of their first-rate scribblers, thinks proper to characterize all the English writers in the gross. "Their whole merit," says he, "consists in exaggeration and often in extravagance; correct their pieces as you please, there still remains a leaven which corrupts the whole. They sometimes discover genius, but not the smallest share of taste; England is not a soil for the plants of genius to thrive in." This is open enough, with not the least adulation in the picture; but hear what a Frenchman of acknowledged abilities says upon the same subject: "I am at a loss to determine in what we excel the English, or where they excel us; when I compare the merits of both in any one species of literary composition, so many reputable and pleasing writers present themselves from either country that my judgment rests in suspense; I am pleased with the disquisition, without finding the object of my inquiry." But lest you should think the French alone are faulty in this respect, hear how an English journalist delivers his sentiments of them. "We are amazed," says he, "to find so many works translated from the French, while we have such numbers neglected of our own. In our opinion, notwithstanding their fame throughout the rest of Europe, the French are the most contemptible reasoners (we had almost said writers) that can be imagined. However, nevertheless, excepting," etc. Another English writer — Shaftesbury, if I remember — on the contrary, says that the French authors are pleasing and judicious, more clear, more methodical, and entertaining than those of his own country.

From these opposite pictures we perceive that the good authors of either country praise and the bad revile each other; and yet, perhaps, you will be surprised that indifferent writers should thus be the most apt to censure, as they have the most to apprehend from recrimination; you may perhaps imagine that such as are possessed of fame themselves should be most ready to declare their opinions, since what they say might pass for decision. But the truth happens to be that

the great are solicitous only of raising their own reputations, while the opposite class, alas ! are solicitous of bringing every reputation down to a level with their own.

But let us acquit them of malice and envy. A critic is often guided by the same motives that direct his author : the author endeavors to persuade us that he has written a good book ; the critic is equally solicitous to show that he could write a better, had he thought proper. A critic is a being possessed of all the vanity but not the genius of a scholar ; incapable, from his native weakness, of lifting himself from the ground, he applies to contiguous merit for support ; makes the sportive sallies of another's imagination his serious employment ; pretends to take our feelings under his care ; teaches where to condemn, where to lay the emphasis of praise ; and may with as much justice be called a man of taste as the Chinese, who measures his wisdom by the length of his nails.<sup>1</sup>

If, then, a book, spirited or humorous, happens to appear in the republic of letters, several critics are in waiting to bid the public not to laugh at a single line of it, for themselves had read it, and they know what is most proper to excite laughter. Other critics contradict the fulminations of this tribunal, call them all spiders, and assure the public that they ought to laugh without restraint. Another set are in the mean time quietly employed in writing notes to the book, intended to show the particular passages to be laughed at ; when these are out, others still there are who write notes upon notes ; thus a single new book employs not only the paper-makers, the printers, the pressmen, the bookbinders, the hawkers, but twenty critics, and as many compilers. In short, the body of the learned may be compared to a Persian army, where there are many pioneers, several sutlers, numberless servants, women and children in abundance, and but few soldiers. Adieu.

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<sup>1</sup> " In China it is fashionable in both men and women to allow the nails of the left hand to grow to an inordinate length, until they assume an appearance very like the claws of the bradypus, as represented in Sir Charles Bell's work on the 'Hand.' The brittleness of the nail rendering it liable to break, they have been known sometimes to protect it, when very long, by means of thin slips of bamboo."

—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 267.

## LETTER XXI.

### THE CHINESE GOES TO SEE A PLAY.

*To the Same.*

THE English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by daylight, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively;<sup>1</sup> an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the play-house, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behavior of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The richest in general were placed in the lowest seats, and

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<sup>1</sup> "The Chinese Government give countenance to spectacles for the people, by permitting them to be erected in every street by subscriptions among the inhabitants. The principal public occasions of these performances are certain annual festivals of a religious nature, when temporary theatres, constructed of bamboos and mats, are erected in front of their temples, or in open spaces through their towns, the spectacle being continued for several days together. The players, in general, come literally under our legal definition of vagabonds, as they consist of strolling bands of ten or a dozen, whose merit and rank in their profession, and consequently their pay, differ widely according to circumstances. The female parts are never performed by women, but generally by boys. They have no scenical deception to assist the story, and the odd expedients to which they are in consequence sometimes driven are not many degrees above Nick Bottom's 'bush of thorns and a lanthorn, to present the person of Moonshine.' Thus, a general is ordered upon an expedition to a distant province; he brandishes a whip, or takes in his hand the reins of a bridle, and striding three or four times round the stage, in the midst of a tremendous crash of gongs, drums, and trumpets, he stops short, and tells the audience where he has arrived."—DAVIS'S *View of the Chinese Drama*.

the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted: those who were undermost all the day now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below; to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself; they were chiefly employed, during this period of expectation, in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste; appearing to labor under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me that not one in a hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement, these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show; not a courtesy or nod that was not the result of art; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for my companion observed that blindness was of late become fashionable; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burnt for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill a heart that sympathizes at human happiness with an expressible serenity.

The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived; the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in courtesying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England; the manner is absurd, but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience, who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still kept its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows.

Her lamentations grew loud; comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound: she bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who, seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

"Truly," said I to my companion, "these kings and queens are very much disturbed at no very great misfortune. Certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common-sense." I had scarce finished this observation, when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace; and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once more.

"Now," says my companion, "you perceive the king to be a man of spirit; he feels at every pore: one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees; but the king is for immediate

tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero; this moment they embrace and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period."

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object: a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. "To what purpose," cried I, "does this unmeaning figure make his appearance? is he a part of the plot?" "Unmeaning do you call him?" replied my friend in black; "this is one of the most important characters of the whole play; nothing pleases the people more than the seeing a straw balanced: there is a great deal of meaning in the straw; there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune."<sup>1</sup>

The third act now began, with an actor who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show strange things before all was over. He was joined by another, who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he; their intrigues continued through this whole division. "If that be a villain," said I, "he must be a very stupid one to tell his secrets without being asked; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China."

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarins infinite satisfaction. "I am sorry," said I, "to see the pretty creature so early learning so bad a trade; dancing being, I presume, as contemptible here as it is in China." Quite the reverse, interrupted my companion; dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flour-

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<sup>1</sup> The exhibitions of Mattocks, the celebrated balance-master, were at this time much run after. Among other tricks, he would balance a straw with great adroitness, sometimes on one hand, and sometimes on the other; and now and then he would kick it with his foot to a considerable height, and catch it upon his nose, his chin, or his forehead.

ishes his toes three times before he comes to the ground may have three hundred a year; he who flourishes them four times gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers, too, are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing; and it is a cant word among them, that she deserves most who shows highest. But the fourth act is begun: let us be attentive."

In the fourth act the queen finds her long-lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts and great qualifications; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveller. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress: he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity, is frantic with rage, and at length, overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops, and the act is concluded.

"Observe the art of the poet," cries my companion. "When the queen can say no more she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy! We feel it in every nerve; take my word for it that fits are the true apopoeisis of modern tragedy."

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, demons, daggers, racks, and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over I could not avoid observing that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last. "How is it possible," said I, "to sympathize with them through five long acts? Pity is but a short-lived passion; I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles; neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes affect me, unless there be cause: after I have been once or twice deceived by those



unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet; all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater: if the actor, therefore, exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause."

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all departed; wherefore, mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street, where, essaying a hundred obstacles, from coach-wheels and palanquin-poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. Adieu.

## LETTER XXII.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER'S SON MADE A SLAVE IN PERSIA.

*From the Same.*

THE letter which came by the way of Smyrna, and which you sent me unopened, was from my son. As I have permitted you to take copies of all those I sent to China, you might have made no ceremony in opening those directed to me. Either in joy or sorrow my friend should participate in my feelings. It would give pleasure to see a good man pleased at my success; it would give almost equal pleasure to see him sympathize at my disappointment.

Every account I receive from the East seems to come loaded with some new affliction. My wife and daughter were taken from me, and yet I sustained the loss with intrepidity; my son is made a slave among barbarians, which was the only blow that could have reached my heart: yes, I will indulge the transports of nature for a little, in order to show I can overcome them in the end. True magnanimity consists not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

When our mighty emperor had published his displeasure at my departure, and seized upon all that was mine, my son was privately secreted from his resentment. Under the protection and guardianship of Fum Hoam, the best and the wisest of all the inhabitants of China, he was for some time instructed in the learning of the missionaries and the wisdom of the East. But hearing of my adventures, and incited by filial piety, he was resolved to follow my fortunes and share my distress.

He passed the confines of China in disguise, hired himself as a camel-driver to a caravan that was crossing the deserts of Thibet, and was within one day's journey of the river Laur, which divides that country from India, when a body of wandering Tartars falling unexpectedly upon the caravan, plundered it, and made those who escaped their first fury slaves. By those he was led into the extensive and desolate regions that border on the shores of the Aral lake.

Here he lived by hunting, and was obliged to supply every day a certain proportion of the spoil, to regale his savage masters. His learning, his virtues, and even his beauty were qualifications that no way served to recommend him; they knew no merit but that of providing large quantities of milk and raw flesh; and were sensible of no happiness but that of rioting on the undressed meal.

Some merchants from Mesched, however, coming to trade with the Tartars for slaves, he was sold among the number, and led into the kingdom of Persia, where he is now detained. He is there obliged to watch the looks of a voluptuous and cruel master, a man fond of pleasure, yet incapable of refinement, whom many years' service in war has taught pride but not bravery.

That treasure which I still keep within my bosom, my child, my all that was left to me, is now a slave.<sup>1</sup> Good heavens, why was this? Why have I been introduced into this mortal apartment to be a spectator of my own misfortunes and the misfortunes of my fellow-creatures? Wherever I

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<sup>1</sup> This whole apostrophe seems most literally translated from Ambulaahamed, the Arabian poet.—GOLDSMITH.

turn, what a labyrinth of doubt, error, and disappointment appears! Why was I brought into being; for what purposes made; from whence have I come; whither strayed; or to what regions am I hastening? Reason cannot resolve. It lends a ray to show the horrors of my prison, but not a light to guide me to escape them. Ye boasted revelations of the earth, how little do you aid the inquiry!

How am I surprised at the inconsistency of the magi! their two principles of good and evil affright me. The Indian who bathes his visage in urine and calls it piety strikes me with astonishment. The Christian who believes in three gods is highly absurd. The Jews who pretend that Deity is pleased with the effusion of blood are not less displeasing. I am equally surprised that rational beings can come from the extremities of the earth in order to kiss a stone,<sup>1</sup> or scatter pebbles. How contrary to reason are those! and yet all pretend to teach me to be happy.

Surely all men are blind and ignorant of truth. Mankind wanders, unknowing his way, from morning till evening. Where shall we turn after happiness; or is it wisest to desist from the pursuit? Like reptiles in a corner of some stupendous palace, we peep from our holes, look about us, wonder at all we see, but are ignorant of the great architect's design. Oh, for a revelation of himself, for a plan of his universal system! Oh, for the reasons of our creation; or why were we created to be thus unhappy! If we are to experience no other felicity but what this life affords, then are we miserable indeed; if we are born only to look about us,<sup>2</sup> repine, and die, then has Heaven been guilty of injustice. If this life terminates my existence, I despise the blessings of Providence, and the wisdom of the giver; if this life be my all, let the following epitaph be written on the tomb of Altangi: "By my father's crimes I received this; by my own crimes I bequeath it to posterity!"

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<sup>1</sup> The Black Stone at Mecca, which, according to tradition, fell from heaven during the life of Adam, and was restored to Paradise at the time of the deluge, but was brought to Abraham at the building of the Caaba.

<sup>2</sup> "Let us, since life can little more supply

Than just to look about us and to die," etc.—POPE, *Essay on Man*.

## LETTER XXIII.

### THE ENGLISH SUBSCRIPTION IN FAVOR OF THE FRENCH PRISONERS COMMENDED.

*To the Same.*

YET, while I sometimes lament the cause of humanity and the depravity of human nature, there now and then appear gleams of greatness that serve to relieve the eye, oppressed with the hideous prospect, and resemble those cultivated spots that are sometimes found in the midst of an Asiatic wilderness. I see many superior excellences among the English, which it is not in the power of all their follies to hide; I see virtues, which in other countries are known only to a few, practised here by every rank of people.

I know not whether it proceeds from their superior opulence that the English are more charitable than the rest of mankind; whether by being possessed of all the conveniences of life themselves, they have more leisure to perceive the uneasy situation of the distressed; whatever be the motive, they are not only the most charitable of any other nation, but most judicious in distinguishing the properest objects of compassion.

In other countries, the giver is generally influenced by the immediate impulse of pity; his generosity is exerted as much to relieve his own uneasy sensations, as to comfort the object in distress. In England, benefactions are of a more general nature. Some men of fortune and universal benevolence propose the proper objects; the wants and the merits of the petitioners are canvassed by the people; neither passion nor pity finds a place in the cool discussion; and charity is then only exerted when it has received the approbation of reason.

A late instance of this finely directed benevolence forces itself so strongly on my imagination that it, in a manner, reconciles me to pleasure, and once more makes me the universal

friend of man. The English and French have not only political reasons to induce them to mutual hatred, but often the more prevailing motive of private interest to widen the breach. A war between other countries is carried on collectively; army fights against army, and a man's own private resentment is lost in that of the community; but in England and France the individuals of each country plunder each other at sea without redress, and consequently feel that animosity against each other which passengers do at a robber. They have for some time carried on an expensive war, and several captives have been taken on both sides: those made prisoners by the French have been used with cruelty, and guarded with unnecessary caution; those taken by the English, being much more numerous, were confined in the ordinary manner; and not being released by their countrymen, began to feel all these inconveniences which arise from want of covering and long confinement.

Their countrymen were informed of their deplorable situation; but they, more intent on annoying their enemies than relieving their friends, refuse the least assistance. The English now saw thousands of their fellow-creatures starving in every prison, forsaken by those whose duty it was to protect them, laboring with disease, and without clothes to keep off the severity of the season. National benevolence prevailed over national animosity; their prisoners were, indeed, enemies, but they were enemies in distress—they ceased to be hateful when they no longer continued to be formidable; forgetting, therefore, their national hatred, the men who were brave enough to conquer were generous enough to forgive; and they whom all the world seemed to have disclaimed at last found pity and redress from those they attempted to subdue. A subscription was opened, ample charities collected, proper necessities procured, and the poor gay sons of a merry nation were once more taught to resume their former gayety.<sup>1</sup>

When I cast my eye over the list of those who contributed

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<sup>1</sup> "Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,  
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please."—*The Traveller*.

on this occasion, I find the names almost entirely English; scarce one foreigner appears among the number. It was for Englishmen alone to be capable of such exalted virtue. I own I cannot look over this catalogue of good men and philosophers without thinking better of myself, because it makes me entertain a more favorable opinion of mankind. I am particularly struck with one who writes these words upon the paper that enclosed his benefaction: "The mite of an Englishman, a Citizen of the World, to Frenchmen, prisoners of war, and naked." I only wish that he may find as much pleasure from his virtues as I have done in reflecting upon them; that alone will amply reward him. Such a one, my friend, is an honor to human nature; he makes no private distinctions of party; all that are stamped with the divine image of their Creator are friends to him; he is a native of the world; and the Emperor of China may be proud that he has such a countryman.

To rejoice at the destruction of our enemies is a foible grafted upon human nature, and we must be permitted to indulge it; the true way of atoning for such an ill-founded pleasure is thus to turn our triumph into an act of benevolence, and to testify our own joy by endeavoring to banish anxiety from others.

Hamti, the best and wisest emperor that ever filled the throne, after having gained three signal victories over the Tartars, who had invaded his dominions, returned to Nankin in order to enjoy the glory of his conquest. After he had rested for some days, the people, who are naturally fond of processions, impatiently expected the triumphal entry which emperors upon such occasions were accustomed to make; their murmurs came to the emperor's ear; he loved his people, and was willing to do all in his power to satisfy their just desires; he therefore assured them that he intended, upon the next Feast of the Lanterns,<sup>1</sup> to exhibit one of the most glorious triumphs that had ever been seen in China.

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<sup>1</sup> "The first full-moon of the new year is the Feast of Lanterns, being a display of ingenuity and taste in the construction and mechanism of an infinite variety of lanterns made of silk, varnish, horn, paper, and glass; some of them supplied with

The people were in raptures at his condescension; and on the appointed day assembled at the gates of the palace with the most eager expectations. Here they waited for some time without seeing any of those preparations which usually precede a pageant. The lantern with ten thousand tapers was not yet brought forth; the fire-works which usually covered the city walls were not yet lighted; the people once more began to murmur at this delay; when, in the midst of their impatience, the palace gates flew open, and the emperor himself appeared, not in splendor or magnificence, but in an ordinary habit, followed by the blind, the maimed, and the strangers of the city, all in new clothes, and each carrying in his hand money enough to supply his necessities for the year. The people were at first amazed, but soon perceived the wisdom of their king, who taught them that to make one man happy was more truly great than having ten thousand captives groaning at the wheels of his chariot. Adieu.

## LETTER XXIV.

THE VENDERS OF QUACK MEDICINES AND NOSTRUMS RIDICULED.

*To the Same.*

WHATEVER may be the merits of the English in other sciences, they seem peculiarly excellent in the art of healing. There is scarcely a disorder incident to humanity against which they are not possessed with a most infallible antidote. The professors of other arts confess the inevitable intricacy of things, talk with doubt, and decide with hesitation; but doubting is entirely unknown in medicine; the advertising professors here delight in cases of difficulty: be the disorder never so desperate or radical, you will find numbers in every street, who, by levelling a pill at the part affected, promise a

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moving figures of men galloping on horseback, fighting, or performing various feats, together with numerous representations of beasts, birds, and other living creatures, the whole in full motion."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 206.

certain cure, without loss of time, knowledge of a bed-fellow, or hinderance of business.

When I consider the assiduity of this profession, their benevolence amazes me. They not only in general give their medicines for half value, but use the most persuasive remonstrances to induce the sick to come and be cured. Sure there must be something strangely obstinate in an English patient who refuses so much health on such easy terms. Does he take a pride in being bloated with a dropsy? does he find pleasure in the alternations of an intermittent fever? or feel as much satisfaction in nursing up his gout as he found pleasure in acquiring it? He must; otherwise he would never reject such repeated assurances of instant relief. What can be more convincing than the manner in which the sick are invited to be well? The doctor first begs the most earnest attention of the public to what he is going to propose; he solemnly affirms the pill was never found to want success; he produces a list of those who have been rescued from the grave by taking it. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there are many here who now and then think proper to be sick. Only sick, did I say? There are some who even think proper to die! Yes, by the head of Confucius, they die! though they might have purchased the health-restoring specific for half a crown at every corner.

I am amazed, my dear Fum Hoam, that these doctors, who know what an obstinate set of people they have to deal with, have never thought of attempting to revive the dead. When the living are found to reject their prescriptions, they ought in conscience to apply to the dead, from whom they can expect no such mortifying repulses; they would find in the dead the most complying patients imaginable; and what gratitude might they not expect from the patient's son, now no longer an heir, and his wife, now no longer a widow?

Think not, my friend, that there is anything chimerical in such an attempt; they already perform cures equally strange. What can be more truly astonishing than to see old age restored to youth, and vigor to the most feeble constitutions? Yet this is performed here every day; a simple electuary



effects these wonders, even without the bungling ceremonies of having the patient boiled up in a kettle, or ground down in a mill.

Few physicians here go through the ordinary courses of education, but receive all their knowledge of medicine by immediate inspiration from heaven. Some are thus inspired even in the womb; and, what is very remarkable, understand their profession as well at three years old as at threescore. Others have spent a great part of their lives unconscious of any latent excellence, till a bankruptcy or a residence in jail have called their miraculous powers into exertion. And others still there are indebted to their superlative ignorance alone for success: the more ignorant the practitioner the less capable is he thought of deceiving. The people here judge as they do in the East, where it is thought absolutely requisite that a man should be an idiot before he pretend to be either a conjurer or a doctor.<sup>1</sup>

When a physician by inspiration is sent for, he never perplexes the patient by previous examination; he asks very few questions, and those only for form sake. He knows every disorder by intuition; he administers the pill or drop for every distemper; nor is more inquisitive than the farrier while he drenches a horse. If the patient lives, then has he one more to add to the surviving list; if he dies, then it may be justly said of the patient's disorder that, "as it was not cured, the disorder was incurable."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In China the medical profession is at a low ebb. They are utterly ignorant of anatomy, and never think of attempting blood-letting, amputation, or any considerable operation. The eunuchs about the palace are generally accounted the most eminent practitioners; but the great proportion of acting physicians are to be found among the lower classes of the community, and the multitude of quacks and nostrum-venders is immense.—See BARROW, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> "When a physician has been unsuccessful he retires, with the common Chinese adage, 'that there is medicine for sickness, but none for fate.'"—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, ii. p. 282.

## LETTER XXV.

THE NATURAL RISE AND DECLINE OF KINGDOMS, EXEMPLIFIED  
IN THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF LAO.

*From the Same.*

I WAS some days ago in company with a politician, who very pathetically declaimed upon the miserable situation of his country. He assured me that the whole political machine was moving in a wrong track, and that scarce even abilities like his own could ever set it right again. "What have we," said he, "to do with the wars on the Continent? we are a commercial nation; we have only to cultivate commerce, like our neighbors the Dutch; it is our business to increase trade by settling new colonies; riches are the strength of a nation; and for the rest, our ships, our ships alone, will protect us." I found it vain to oppose my feeble arguments to those of a man who thought himself wise enough to direct even the ministry. I fancied, however, that I saw with more certainty, because I reasoned without prejudice; I therefore begged leave, instead of argument, to relate a short history. He gave me a smile at once of condescension and contempt, and I proceeded as follows to describe the rise and declension of the kingdom of Lao.

Northward of China, and in one of the doublings of the great wall, the fruitful province of Lao enjoyed its liberty, and a peculiar government of its own. As the inhabitants were on all sides surrounded by the wall, they feared no sudden invasion from the Tartars; and being each possessed of property, they were zealous in its defence.

The natural consequence of security and affluence in any country is a love of pleasure: when the wants of nature are supplied, we seek after the conveniences; when possessed of these, we desire the luxuries of life; and when every luxury is provided, it is then ambition takes up the man, and leaves

him still something to wish for. The inhabitants of the country, from primitive simplicity, soon began to aim at elegance, and from elegance proceeded to refinement. It was now found absolutely requisite, for the good of the state, that the people should be divided. Formerly, the same hand that was employed in tilling the ground, or in dressing up the manufactures, was also in time of need a soldier; but the custom was now changed: for it was perceived that a man bred up from childhood to the arts, either of peace or of war, became more eminent by this means in his respective profession. The inhabitants were, therefore, now distinguished into artisans and soldiers; and while those improved the luxuries of life, these watched for the security of the people.

A country possessed of freedom has always two sorts of enemies to fear—foreign foes who attack its existence from without, and internal miscreants who betray its liberties within. The inhabitants of Lao were to guard against both. A country of artisans were most likely to preserve internal liberty, and a nation of soldiers were fittest to repel a foreign invasion. Hence naturally arose a division of opinion between the artisans and the soldiers of the kingdom. The artisans, ever complaining that freedom was threatened by an armed internal force, were for disbanding the soldiers, and insisted that their walls, their walls alone, were sufficient to repel the most formidable invasion; the warriors, on the contrary, represented the power of the neighboring kings, the combinations formed against their state, and the weakness of the wall, which every earthquake might overturn. While this altercation continued, the kingdom might be justly said to enjoy its greatest share of vigor: every order in the state, by being watchful over each other, contributed to diffuse happiness equally, and balanced the state. The arts of peace flourished, nor were those of war neglected; the neighboring powers, who had nothing to apprehend from the ambition of men whom they only saw solicitous, not for riches but freedom, were contented to traffic with them; they sent their goods to be manufactured in Lao, and paid a large price for them upon their return.

By these means, this people at length became moderately rich, and their opulence naturally invited the invader: a Tartar prince led an immense army against them, and they as bravely stood up in their own defence; they were still inspired with a love of their country; they fought the barbarous enemy with fortitude, and gained a complete victory.

From this moment, which they regarded as the completion of their glory, historians date their downfall. They had risen in strength by a love of their country, and fell by indulging ambition. The country possessed by the invading Tartars, seemed to them a prize that would not only render them more formidable for the future, but which would increase their opulence for the present; it was unanimously resolved, therefore, both by soldiers and artisans, that those desolate regions should be peopled by colonies from Lao. When a trading nation begins to act the conqueror, it is then perfectly undone: it subsists in some measure by the support of its neighbors: while they continue to regard it without envy or apprehension, trade may flourish; but when once it presumes to assert as its right, what it only enjoyed as a favor, each country reclaims that part of commerce which it has power to take back, and turns it into some other channel more honorable, though perhaps less convenient.

Every neighbor now began to regard with jealous eyes this ambitious commonwealth, and forbade their subjects any future intercourse with them. The inhabitants of Lao, however, still pursued the same ambitious maxims: it was from their colonies alone they expected riches; and riches, said they, are strength, and strength is security. Numberless were the migrations of the desperate and enterprising of this country, to people the desolate dominions lately possessed by the Tartar. Between these colonies and the mother-country a very advantageous traffic was at first carried on; the republic sent their colonies large quantities of the manufactures of the country, and they in return provided the republic with an equivalent in ivory and ginseng. By this means the inhabitants became immensely rich, and this produced an equal degree of voluptuousness; for men who have much money will always find

some fantastical modes of enjoyment. How shall I mark the steps by which they declined? Every colony in process of time spreads over the whole country where it first was planted. As it grows more populous it becomes more polite; and those manufactures for which it was in the beginning obliged to others, it learns to dress up itself. Such was the case with the colonies of Lao; they, in less than a century, became a powerful and a polite people, and the more polite they grew, the less advantageous was the commerce which still subsisted between them and others. By this means the mother-country, being abridged in its commerce, grew poorer, but not less luxurious. Their former wealth had introduced luxury; and wherever luxury once fixes, no art can either lessen or remove it. Their commerce with their neighbors was totally destroyed, and that with their colonies was every day naturally and necessarily declining; they still, however, preserved the insolence of wealth without a power to support it, and persevered in being luxurious while contemptible from poverty. In short, the state resembled one of those bodies bloated with disease, whose bulk is only a symptom of its wretchedness.

Their former opulence only rendered them more impotent, as those individuals who are reduced from riches to poverty are of all men the most unfortunate and helpless. They had imagined, because their colonies tended to make them rich upon the first acquisition, they would still continue to do so; they now found, however, that on themselves alone they should have depended for support; that colonies ever afford but temporary affluence, and when cultivated and polite are no longer useful. From such a concurrence of circumstances they soon became contemptible. The Emperor Honti invaded them with a powerful army. Historians do not say whether their colonies were too remote to lend assistance, or else were desirous of shaking off their dependence; but certain it is, they scarce made any resistance; their walls were now found but a weak defence, and they at length were obliged to acknowledge subjection to the Empire of China.

Happy, very happy, might they have been had they known

when to bound their riches and their glory; had they known that extending empire is often diminishing power;<sup>1</sup> that countries are ever strongest which are internally powerful; that colonies, by draining away the brave and enterprising, leave the country in the hands of the timid and the avaricious; that walls give little protection unless manned with resolution; that too much commerce may injure a nation as well as too little; and that there is a wide difference between a conquering and a flourishing empire.<sup>2</sup> Adieu.

## LETTER XXVI.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MAN IN BLACK, WITH SOME INSTANCES OF HIS INCONSISTENT CONDUCT.

*From the Same.*

THOUGH fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The man in black whom I have often mentioned is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and while his looks were softened into pity I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast

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<sup>1</sup> "Extended empire, like expanded gold,  
Exchanges solid strength for feeble splendor."—JOHNSON'S *Irene*.

<sup>2</sup> "Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey  
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,  
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
Between a splendid and a happy land."—*The Deserted Village*.

of having such dispositions from nature ; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference ; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.<sup>1</sup>

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on ; they want no more ; I desire no more myself ; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious ; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences ; let me assure you, sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me ; but it was quite otherwise with the

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<sup>1</sup> "I have often affected bluntness to avoid the imputation of flattery, and have frequently seemed to overlook those merits too obvious to escape notice, and pretended disregard to those instances of good-nature and good-sense which I could not fail tacitly to applaud ; and all this lest I should be ranked among the grinning tribe who say 'Very well' to all that is said," etc.—*Goldsmith to Mrs. Jane Lavender*, Aug. 15th, 1758.

man in black: I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burnt to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued as we proceeded to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before; he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate; hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggarmen. He was beginning a third to the same purpose when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend, looking wishfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship-of-war, and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask; he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my



friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired in a surly tone to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase; he assured me that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch who, in the deepest distress, still aimed at good-humor was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding; his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

## LETTER XXVII.

### THE HISTORY OF THE MAN IN BLACK.

*To the Same.*

As there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be his motives for thus concealing virtues which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to act under continual restraint, and whose benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

It was not, however, till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. "If you are fond," says he, "of hearing hair-breadth 'scapes, my history must certainly please; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the Church.<sup>1</sup> His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them they returned an equivalent in praise; and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army influenced my father at the head of his table; he told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy in the sedan chair was sure to set the table in a roar. Thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

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<sup>1</sup> In this story are contained portions of Goldsmith's own early history.

“As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it; he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross; he was resolved they should have learning, for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose, he undertook to instruct us himself; and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard ‘the human face divine’ with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse, made either by real or fictitious distress; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing.

“I cannot avoid imagining that, thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which nature had given me, I resembled, upon my first entrance into the busy and insidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed without armor in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discernment; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world, but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

“The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations disappointed was at the very middling figure I made in the university; he had flattered himself that he should soon see me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having overrated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasonings, at a time when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, however, please my tutors, who observed indeed, that I

was a little dull; but at the same time allowed that I seemed to be very good-natured, and had no harm in me.<sup>1</sup>

"After I had resided at college seven years, my father died, and left me—his blessing. Thus shoved from shore, without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in life, my friends advised (for they always advise when they begin to despise us)—they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

"To be obliged to wear a long wig when I liked a short one, or a black coat when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty that I absolutely rejected the proposal. A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China: with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned the best liver; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration but that boyish one of dress. So that my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him, and was so very good-natured.

"Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first I was surprised that the situation of a flatterer at a great man's table could be thought disagreeable; there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing when he looked round for applause. This even good-manners might have obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon, that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself; and from that very moment my power of flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right than at receiving his absurdities with submission: to flatter those we do not know is an easy task; but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my false-

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<sup>1</sup> "Who can possibly doubt the original from whom the man in black's experiences were taken?"—FORSTER'S *Life of Goldsmith*, vol. i. p. 35.

hood went to my conscience; his lordship soon perceived me to be unfit for service; I was therefore discharged, my patron at the same time being graciously pleased to observe that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

“Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reasons to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt among the number; she always observed that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favor. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship and the beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival’s high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favor; so, after resolving and re-resolving, I had courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness; which was no more, than—that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high-heeled shoes! By way of consolation, however, she observed that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into sensibility, as the old lady always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

“Yet still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O friendship! thou fond soother of the human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity; to thee the wretched seek for succor; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies; from thy kind assistance the unfortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of—disappointment! My first application was to a City scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend me money when he knew I did not want it. I informed him that now was the time to put his friendship to the test; that I wanted to borrow a couple of

hundreds for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him. 'And pray, sir,' cried my friend, 'do you want all this money?' 'Indeed I never wanted it more,' returned I. 'I am sorry for that,' cries the scrivener, 'with all my heart; for they who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay.'

"From him I flew with indignation to one of the best friends I had in the world, and made the same request. 'Indeed, Mr. Drybone,' cries my friend, 'I always thought it would come to this. You know, sir, I would not advise you but for your own good; but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your acquaintance always thought you a very silly fellow. Let me see, you want two hundred pounds. Do you want only two hundred, sir, exactly?' 'To confess a truth,' returned I, 'I shall want three hundred; but then I have another friend, from whom I can borrow the rest.' 'Why, then,' replied my friend, 'if you would take my advice (and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own good), I would recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend; and then one note will serve for all, you know.'

"Poverty now began to come fast upon me; yet, instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds; I was unable to extricate him except by becoming his bail. When at liberty he fled from his creditors, and left me to take his place. In prison I expected greater satisfactions than I had enjoyed at large. I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself; but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They sponged up my money while it lasted, borrowed my coals and never paid for them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured, and knew that I had no harm in me.

"Upon my first entrance into this mansion, which is to some the abode of despair, I felt no sensations different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side the door,

and those who were unconfined were on the other; this was all the difference between us. At first, indeed, I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to provide this week for the wants of the week ensuing; but after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious meal with the utmost good-humor; indulged no rants of spleen at my situation; never called down heaven and all the stars to behold me dining upon a halfpenny-worth of radishes; my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown; considered that all that happened was best; laughed when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often, for want of more books and company.

“How long I might have continued in this torpid state of simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, preferred to a place in the Government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being able to relieve others was first to aim at independence myself; my immediate care, therefore, was to leave my present habitation, and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behavior. For a free, open, undesigning deportment I put on that of closeness, prudence, and economy. One of the most heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half a crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it and I had it to spare; for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.

“I now, therefore, pursued a course of uninterrupted frugality, seldom wanted a dinner, and was consequently invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunk that had money, and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbors have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters; and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contracted a friendship with an alderman, only by observing that if we take a farthing from a thousand pounds it

will be a thousand pounds no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker's table by pretending to hate gravy; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow for only having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with impostors, and take a certain method of not being deceived, by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem, even from the indigent, is—to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give.”

## LETTER XXVIII.

ON THE GREAT NUMBER OF OLD MAIDS AND BACHELORS IN  
LONDON.—SOME OF THE CAUSES.

*To the Same.*

LATELY in company with my friend in black, whose conversation is now both my amusement and instruction, I could not avoid observing the great numbers of old bachelors and maiden ladies with which this city seems to be overrun. “Sure, marriage,” said I, “is not sufficiently encouraged, or we should never behold such crowds of battered beaux and decayed coquettes still attempting to drive a trade they have been so long unfit for, and swarming upon the gayety of the age. I behold an old bachelor in the most contemptible light, as an animal that lives upon the common stock without contributing his share; he is a beast of prey, and the laws should make use of as many stratagems and as much force to drive the reluctant savage into the toils as the Indians when they hunt the hyena or the rhinoceros. The mob should be permitted after him; boys might play tricks on him with impunity; every well-bred company should laugh at him; and if, when turned of sixty, he offered to make love, his



mistress might spit in his face, or, what would be perhaps a greater punishment, should fairly grant him the favor.

"As for old maids," continued I, "they should not be treated with so much severity, because I suppose none would be so if they could. No lady in her senses would choose to make a subordinate figure at christenings and lyings-in, when she might be the principal herself; nor curry favor with a sister-in-law, when she might command a husband; nor toil in preparing custards, when she might lie abed and give directions how they ought to be made; nor stifle all her sensations in demure formality, when she might with matrimonial freedom shake her acquaintance by the hand, and wink at a *double entendre*. No lady could be so very silly as to live single if she could help it. I consider an unmarried lady declining into the vale of years as one of those charming countries bordering on China, that lies waste for want of proper inhabitants. We are not to accuse the country, but the ignorance of its neighbors, who are insensible of its beauties, though at liberty to enter and cultivate the soil."

"Indeed, sir," replied my companion, "you are very little acquainted with the English ladies, to think they are old maids against their will. I dare venture to affirm that you can hardly select one of them all who has not had frequent offers of marriage, which either pride or avarice has not made her reject. Instead of thinking it a disgrace, they take every occasion to boast of their former cruelty; a soldier does not exult more when he counts over the wounds he has received than a female veteran when she relates the wounds she has formerly given: exhaustless when she begins a narrative of the former death-dealing power of her eyes. She tells of the knight in gold lace, who died with a single frown, and never rose again till—he was married to his maid; of the squire who, being cruelly denied, in a rage flew to the window and, lifting up the sash, threw himself in an agony—into his arm-chair; of the parson who, crossed in love, resolutely swallowed opium, which banished the stings of despised love by—making him sleep. In short, she talks over her former losses

with pleasure, and, like some tradesmen, finds consolation in the many bankruptcies she has suffered.

“For this reason, whenever I see a superannuated beauty still unmarried, I tacitly accuse her either of pride, avarice, coquetry, or affectation. There’s Miss Jenny Tinderbox—I once remember her to have had some beauty, and a moderate fortune. Her elder sister happened to marry a man of quality, and this seemed as a statute of virginity against poor Jane. Because there was one lucky hit in the family, she was resolved not to disgrace it by introducing a tradesman. By thus rejecting her equals, and neglected or despised by her superiors, she now acts in the capacity of tutoress to her sister’s children, and undergoes the drudgery of three servants, without receiving the wages of one.

“Miss Squeeze was a pawnbroker’s daughter; her father had early taught her that money was a very good thing, and left her a moderate fortune at his death. She was so perfectly sensible of the value of what she had got, that she was resolved never to part with a farthing without an equality on the part of her suitor: she thus refused several offers made her by people who wanted to better themselves, as the saying is, and grew old and ill-natured, without ever considering that she should have made an abatement in her pretensions, from her face being pale and marked with the small-pox.

“Lady Betty Tempest, on the contrary, had beauty, with fortune and family. But, fond of conquest, she passed from triumph to triumph. She had read plays and romances, and there had learned that a plain man of common-sense was no better than a fool; such she refused, and sighed only for the gay, giddy, inconstant, and thoughtless. After she had thus rejected hundreds who liked her, and sighed for hundreds who despised her, she found herself insensibly deserted; at present she is company only for her aunts and cousins, and sometimes makes one in a country dance, with only one of the chairs for a partner, casts off round a joint-stool, and sets to a corner cupboard. In a word, she is treated with civil contempt from every quarter, and placed, like a piece of old-fashioned lumber, merely to fill up a corner.

“But Sophronia, the sagacious Sophronia, how shall I mention her? She was taught to love Greek, and hate the men from her very infancy; she has rejected fine gentlemen because they were not pedants, and pedants because they were not fine gentlemen; her exquisite sensibility has taught her to discover every fault in every lover, and her inflexible justice has prevented her pardoning them: thus she rejected several offers, till the wrinkles of age had overtaken her; and now, without one good feature in her face, she talks incessantly of the beauties of the mind.” Farewell.

## LETTER XXIX.

## A DESCRIPTION OF A CLUB OF AUTHORS.

*From the Same.*

WERE we to estimate the learning of the English by the number of books that are every day published among them, perhaps no country, not even China itself, could equal them in this particular. I have reckoned not less than twenty-three new books published in one day; which upon computation makes eight thousand three hundred and ninety-five in one year. Most of these are not confined to one single science, but embrace the whole circle. History, politics, poetry, mathematics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of nature, are all comprised in a manual not larger than that in which our children are taught the letters. If, then, we suppose the learned of England to read but an eighth part of the works which daily come from the press—and sure none can pretend to learning upon less easy terms—at this rate every scholar will read a thousand books in one year. From such a calculation you may conjecture what an amazing fund of literature a man must be possessed of who thus reads three new books every day, not one of which but contains all the good things that ever were said or written.

And yet I know not how it happens, but the English are

not in reality so learned as would seem from this calculation. We meet but few who know all arts and sciences to perfection; whether it is that the generality are incapable of such extensive knowledge, or that the authors of those books are not adequate instructors. In China, the emperor himself takes cognizance of all the doctors in the kingdom who profess authorship.<sup>1</sup> In England, every man may be an author that can write; for they have by law a liberty not only of saying what they please, but of being also as dull as they please.

Yesterday I testified my surprise to the man in black, where writers could be found in sufficient number to throw off the books I daily saw crowding from the press. I at first imagined that their learned seminaries might take this method of instructing the world. But to obviate this objection, my companion assured me, that the doctors of colleges never wrote, and that some of them had actually forgotten their reading. "But if you desire," continued he, "to see a collection of authors, I fancy I can introduce you this evening to a club, which assembles every Saturday at seven, at the sign of 'The Broom,' near Islington," to talk over the business of the last and the entertainment of the week ensuing." I accepted his invitation; we walked together, and entered the house some time before the usual hour for the company assembling.

My friend took this opportunity of letting me into the characters of the principal members of the club, not even the

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<sup>1</sup> "One of the most remarkable national peculiarities of China is their extraordinary addiction to letters, and the very honorable pre-eminence which, from the most remote period, has been universally conceded to that class which is exclusively devoted to literary pursuits. Everything that is subservient to, or connected with, literary objects in China is carried to a degree of refinement, and blended with all their ordinary concerns of pleasure and of business, in a way that may seem extravagant and puerile. Their customary reverence for letters is such that they will not tread upon written or printed paper."—Sir GEORGE STAUNTON'S *Miscellaneous Notices*, p. ii. chap. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Islington was one of Goldsmith's frequent resorts and occasional residences. Some of the supposed authors in this and the succeeding letter were no doubt real characters.

host excepted—who, it seems, was once an author himself, but preferred by a bookseller to this situation as a reward for his former services.

“The first person,” said he, “of our society is Doctor Non-entity, a metaphysician. Most people think him a profound scholar; but as he seldom speaks, I cannot be positive in that particular; he generally spreads himself before the fire, sucks his pipe, talks little, drinks much, and is reckoned very good company. I’m told he writes indexes to perfection; he makes essays on the origin of evil, philosophical inquiries upon any subject, and draws up an answer to any book upon twenty-four hours’ warning. You may distinguish him from the rest of the company by his long gray wig, and the blue handkerchief round his neck.

“The next to him in merit and esteem is Tim Syllabub, a droll creature; he sometimes shines as a star of the first magnitude among the choice spirits of the age; he is reckoned equally excellent at a rebus, a riddle, a bawdy song, and a hymn for the Tabernacle. You will know him by his shabby finery, his powdered wig, dirty shirt, and broken silk stockings.

“After him succeeds Mr. Tibbs, a very useful hand; he writes receipts for the bite of a mad dog, and throws off an Eastern tale to perfection; he understands the business of an author as well as any man, for no bookseller alive can cheat him. You may distinguish him by the peculiar clumsiness of his figure and the coarseness of his coat; however, though it be coarse (as he frequently tells the company), he has paid for it.

“Lawyer Squint is the politician of the society; he makes speeches for Parliament, writes addresses to his fellow-subjects, and letters to noble commanders; he gives the history of every new play, and finds ‘seasonable thoughts’ upon every occasion.” My companion was proceeding in his description, when the host came running in, with terror on his countenance, to tell us that the door was beset with bailiffs. “If that be the case, then,” says my companion, “we had as good be going; for I am positive we shall not see one of the com-

pany this night." Wherefore, disappointed, we were both obliged to return home: he to enjoy the oddities which compose his character alone, and I to write as usual to my friend the occurrences of the day. Adieu.

### LETTER XXX.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB OF AUTHORS.

*From the Same.*

By my last advices from Moscow I find the caravan has not yet departed for China. I still continue to write, expecting that you may receive a large number of my letters at once. In them you will find rather a minute detail of English peculiarities, than a general picture of their manners or disposition. Happy it were for mankind if all travellers would thus, instead of characterizing a people in general terms, lead us into a detail of those minute circumstances which first influenced their opinion. The genius of a country should be investigated with a kind of experimental inquiry; by this means we should have more precise and just notions of foreign nations, and detect travellers themselves when they happened to form wrong conclusions.

My friend and I repeated our visit to the club of authors; where, upon our entrance, we found the members all assembled and engaged in a loud debate.

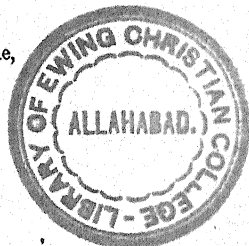
The poet, in shabby finery, holding a manuscript in his hand, was earnestly endeavoring to persuade the company to hear him read the first book of an heroic poem which he had composed the day before. But against this all the members very warmly objected. They knew no reason why any member of the club should be indulged with a particular hearing, when many of them had published whole volumes which had never been looked in. They insisted that the law should be observed, where reading in company was expressly noticed. It was in vain that the plaintiff pleaded the peculiar merit of

his piece: he spoke to an assembly insensible to all his remonstrances; the book of laws was opened, and read by the secretary, where it was expressly enacted, "That whatsoever poet, speech-maker, critic, or historian should presume to engage the company by reading his own works, he was to lay down sixpence previous to opening the manuscript, and should be charged one shilling an hour while he continued reading: the said shilling to be equally distributed among the company as a recompense for their trouble."

Our poet seemed at first to shrink at the penalty, hesitating for some time whether he should deposit the fine, or shut up the poem; but looking round, and perceiving two strangers in the room, his love of fame outweighed his prudence, and laying down the sum by law established, he insisted on his prerogative.

A profound silence ensuing, he began by explaining his design. "Gentlemen," says he, "the present piece is not one of your common epic poems, which come from the press like paper kites in summer; there are none of your Turnuses or Didos in it; it is an heroical description of Nature. I only beg you'll endeavor to make your souls unison with mine, and hear with the same enthusiasm with which I have written. The poem begins with the description of an author's bedchamber; the picture was sketched in my own apartment, for you must know, gentlemen, that I am myself the hero." Then putting himself into the attitude of an orator, with all the emphasis of voice and action, he proceeded:

"Where the Red Lion flaring o'er the way  
Invites each passing stranger that can pay;  
Where Calvert's butt, and Parson's black champagne,  
Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury Lane;  
There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,  
The muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug.  
A window patch'd with paper lent a ray,  
That dimly show'd the state in which he lay:  
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread;  
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;  
The royal game of goose was there in view,  
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;



The seasons fram'd with listing found a place,  
 And brave Prince William show'd his lamp-black face:<sup>1</sup>  
 The morn was cold: he views with keen desire  
 The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire;  
 With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,  
 And five crack'd teacups dress'd the chimney-board;  
 A nightcap deck'd his brows instead of bay,  
 A cap by night—a stocking all the day!"

With this last line he seemed so much elated that he was unable to proceed. "There, gentlemen," cries he—"there is a description for you; Rabelais's bed-chamber is but a fool to it.

'A cap by night—a stocking all the day!'—

there is sound and sense, and truth and nature in the trifling compass of ten little syllables."

He was too much employed in self-admiration to observe the company; who, by nods, winks, shrugs, and stifled laughter, testified every mark of contempt. He turned severally to each for their opinion, and found all, however, ready to applaud. One swore it was inimitable; another said it was damn'd fine; and a third cried out in a rapture, "Carissimo!" At last, addressing himself to the president, "And pray, Mr. Squint," says he, "let us have your opinion." "Mine!" answered the president, taking the manuscript out of the author's hand—"may this glass suffocate me, but I think it equal to anything I have seen; and I fancy," continued he, doubling up the poem, and forcing it into the author's pocket, "that you will get great honor when it comes out; so I shall beg leave to put it in. We will not intrude upon your good-nature, in desiring to hear more of it at present; *ex ungue Herculem*, we are satisfied, perfectly satisfied." The author made two or three attempts to pull it out a second time, and the president made as many to prevent him. Thus, though with reluctance, he was at last obliged to sit down, contented with the commendations for which he had paid.

When this tempest of poetry and praise was blown over,

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<sup>1</sup> "And Prussia's monarch show'd his lamp-black face."—See GOLDSMITH'S Letter to his brother, in Vol. VIII.



one of the company changed the subject, by wondering how any man could be so dull as to write poetry at present, since prose itself would hardly pay. "Would you think it, gentlemen?" continued he, "I have actually written last week sixteen prayers, twelve bawdy jests, and three sermons, all at the rate of sixpence apiece; and what is still more extraordinary, the bookseller has lost by the bargain. Such sermons would once have gained me a prebend's stall; but now, alas! we have neither piety, taste, nor humor among us. Positively, if this season does not turn out better than it has begun, unless the ministry commit some blunders to furnish us with a new topic of abuse, I shall resume my old business of working at the press, instead of finding it employment."

The whole club seemed to join in condemning the season, as one of the worst that had come for some time; a gentleman particularly observed that the nobility were never known to subscribe worse than at present. "I know not how it happens," said he; "though I follow them up as close as possible yet I can hardly get a single subscription in a week. The houses of the great are as inaccessible as a frontier garrison at midnight. I never see a nobleman's door half-opened that some surly porter or footman does not stand full in the breach. I was yesterday to wait with a subscription-proposal upon my Lord Squash, the creolian. I had posted myself at his door the whole morning, and just as he was getting into his coach thrust my proposal snug into his hand, folded up in the form of a letter from myself. He just glanced at the superscription, and not knowing the hand, consigned it to his valet-de-chambre; this respectable personage treated it as his master, and put it into the hands of the porter; the porter grasped my proposal frowning; and measuring my figure from top to toe, put it back into my own hands unopened."

"To the devil I pitch all the nobility!" cries a little man, in a peculiar accent; "I am sure they have of late used me most scurvily. You must know, gentlemen, some time ago, upon the arrival of a certain noble duke from his travels, I set myself down, and vamped up a fine, flaunting poetical panegyric, which I had written in such a strain that I fancied

it would have even wheedled milk from a mouse. In this I represented the whole kingdom welcoming his grace to his native soil, not forgetting the loss France and Italy would sustain in their arts by his departure. I expected to touch for a bank-bill at least; so folding up my verses in gilt paper, I gave my last half-crown to a genteel servant to be the bearer. My letter was safely conveyed to his grace, and the servant, after four hours' absence, during which time I led the life of a fiend, returned with a letter four times as big as mine. Guess my ecstasy at the prospect of so fine a return. I eagerly took the packet into my hands, that trembled to receive it. I kept it some time unopened before me, brooding over the expected treasure it contained; when, opening it, as I hope to be saved, gentlemen, his grace had sent me in payment for my poem, no bank-bills, but six copies of verse, each longer than mine, addressed to him upon the same occasion."

"A nobleman," cries a member who had hitherto been silent, "is created as much for the confusion of us authors as the catchpoll. I'll tell you a story, gentlemen, which is as true as that this pipe is made of clay. When I was delivered of my first book, I owed my tailor for a suit of clothes; but that is nothing new, you know, and may be any man's case as well as mine. Well, owing him for a suit of clothes, and hearing that my book took very well, he sent for his money, and insisted upon being paid immediately; though I was at that time rich in fame, for my book ran like wildfire, yet I was very short in money, and being unable to satisfy his demand, prudently resolved to keep my chamber, preferring a prison of my own choosing at home to one of my tailor's choosing abroad. In vain the bailiffs used all their arts to decoy me from my citadel; in vain they sent to let me know that a gentleman wanted to speak with me at the next tavern; in vain they came with an urgent message from my aunt in the country; in vain I was told that a particular friend was at the point of death, and desired to take his last farewell; I was deaf, insensible, rock, adamant; the bailiffs could make no impression on my hard heart, for I effectually kept my liberty by never stirring out of the room.

“This was very well for a fortnight; when one morning I received a most splendid message from the Earl of Doomsday, importing that he had read my book, and was in raptures with every line of it; he impatiently longed to see the author, and had some designs which might turn out greatly to my advantage. I paused upon the contents of this message, and found there could be no deceit, for the card was gilt at the edges, and the bearer, I was told, had quite the looks of a gentleman. Witness, ye powers, how my heart triumphed at my own importance! I saw a long perspective of felicity before me; I applauded the taste of the times, which never saw genius forsaken; I had prepared a set introductory speech for the occasion, five glaring compliments for his lordship, and two more modest for myself. The next morning, therefore, in order to be punctual to my appointment, I took coach, and ordered the fellow to drive to the street and house mentioned in his lordship’s address. I had the precaution to pull up the window as I went along to keep off the busy part of mankind, and, big with expectation, fancied the coach never went fast enough. At length, however, the wished-for moment of its stopping arrived; this for some time I impatiently expected, and letting down the window in a transport, in order to take a previous view of his lordship’s magnificent palace and situation, I found—poison to my sight! I found myself, not in an elegant street, but a paltry lane; not at a nobleman’s door, but the door of a sponging-house; I found the coachman had all this while been driving me to jail, and I saw the bailiff, with a devil’s face, coming out to secure me.”

To a philosopher no circumstance, however trifling, is too minute; he finds instruction and entertainment in occurrences which are passed over by the rest of mankind as low, trite, and indifferent; it is from the number of these particulars, which to many appear insignificant, that he is at last enabled to form general conclusions. This, therefore, must be my excuse for sending so far as China accounts of manners and follies which, though minute in their own nature, serve more truly to characterize this people than histories of their public treaties, courts, ministers, negotiations, and ambassadors. Adieu.

## LETTER XXXI.

### THE PERFECTION OF THE CHINESE IN THE ART OF GARDENING.—DESCRIPTION OF A CHINESE GARDEN.

*From the Same.*

THE English have not yet brought the art of gardening to the same perfection with the Chinese, but have lately begun to imitate them: nature is now followed with greater assiduity than formerly; the trees are suffered to shoot out into the utmost luxuriance; the streams, no longer forced from their native beds, are permitted to wind along the valleys; spontaneous flowers take place of the finished parterre, and the enamelled meadow of the shaven green.

Yet still the English are far behind us in this charming art; their designers have not yet attained a power of uniting instruction with beauty. A European will scarcely conceive my meaning, when I say that there is scarce a garden in China which does not contain some fine moral, couched under the general design, where one is not taught wisdom as he walks, and feels the force of some noble truth or delicate precept, resulting from the disposition of the groves, streams, or grottoes. Permit me to illustrate what I mean by a description of my gardens at Quamsi. My heart still hovers round those scenes of former happiness with pleasure; and I find a satisfaction in enjoying them at this distance, though but in imagination.

You descended from the house between two groves of trees, planted in such a manner that they were impenetrable to the eye; while on each hand the way was adorned with all that was beautiful in porcelain, statuary, and painting. This passage from the house opened into an area surrounded with rocks, flowers, trees, and shrubs, but all so disposed as if each was the spontaneous production of nature. As you proceeded forward on this lawn, to your right and left hand were two

gates, opposite each other, of very different architecture and design; and before you lay a temple built rather with minute elegance than ostentation.

The right-hand gate was planned with the utmost simplicity, or rather rudeness; ivy clasped round the pillars, the baleful cypress hung over it; time seemed to have destroyed all the smoothness and regularity of the stone; two champions with lifted clubs appeared in the act of guarding its access; dragons and serpents were seen in the most hideous attitudes, to deter the spectator from approaching; and the perspective view that lay behind seemed dark and gloomy to the last degree; the stranger was tempted to enter only from the motto—*Pervia Virtuti*.

The opposite gate was formed in a very different manner; the architecture was light, elegant, and inviting; flowers hung in wreaths round the pillars; all was finished in the most exact and masterly manner; the very stone of which it was built still preserved its polish; nymphs, wrought by the hand of a master, in the most alluring attitudes, beckoned the stranger to approach; while all that lay behind, as far as the eye could reach, seemed gay, luxuriant, and capable of affording endless pleasure. The motto itself contributed to invite him, for over the gate were written these words—*Facilis Descensus*.

By this time I fancy you begin to perceive that the gloomy gate was designed to represent the road to virtue; the opposite, the more agreeable passage to vice. It is but natural to suppose that the spectator was always tempted to enter by the gate which offered him so many allurements. I always in these cases left him to his choice; but generally found that he took to the left, which promised most entertainment.

Immediately upon his entering the gate of vice the trees and flowers were disposed in such a manner as to make the most pleasing impression; but, as he walked farther on, he insensibly found the garden assume the air of a wilderness, the landscapes began to darken, the paths grew more intricate, he appeared to go downward, frightful rocks seemed to hang over his head, gloomy caverns, unexpected precipices, awful

ruins, heaps of unburied bones, and terrifying sounds caused by unseen waters, began to take place of what at first appeared so lovely; it was in vain to attempt returning—the labyrinth was too much perplexed for any but myself to find the way back. In short, when sufficiently impressed with the horrors of what he saw, and the imprudence of his choice, I brought him by a hidden door a shorter way back into the area from whence at first he had strayed.

The gloomy gate now presented itself before the stranger; and though there seemed little in its appearance to tempt his curiosity, yet, encouraged by the motto, he gradually proceeded. The darkness of the entrance, the frightful figures that seemed to obstruct his way, the trees of a mournful green, conspired at first to disgust him; as he went forward, however, all began to open and wear a more pleasing appearance; beautiful cascades, beds of flowers, trees loaded with fruit or blossoms, and unexpected brooks improved the scene; he now found that he was ascending, and, as he proceeded, all nature grew more beautiful; the prospect widened as he went higher, even the air itself seemed to become more pure. Thus pleased and happy from unexpected beauties, I at last led him to an arbor from whence he could view the garden and the whole country around, and where he might own that the road to virtue terminated in happiness.

Though from this description you may imagine that a vast tract of ground was necessary to exhibit such a pleasing variety in, yet be assured I have seen several gardens in England take up ten times the space which mine did without half the beauty. A very small extent of ground is enough for an elegant taste: the greater room is required if magnificence is in view. There is no spot, though ever so little, which a skilful designer might not thus improve so as to convey a delicate allegory, and impress the mind with truths the most useful and necessary. Adieu.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This letter was written shortly after the appearance of Sir William (then Mr.) Chambers's work on Chinese Temples, etc. "Sir William's description of Chinese gardening is a mere prose work of imagination, without a shadow of foundation in reality. Their taste is, indeed, extremely defective and vicious on this particular

## LETTER XXXII.

OF THE DEGENERACY OF SOME OF THE ENGLISH NOBILITY.—A  
MUSHROOM FEAST AMONG THE TARTARS.

*From the Same.*

IN a late excursion with my friend into the country, a gentleman with a blue ribbon tied round his shoulder, and in a chariot drawn by six horses, passed swiftly by us, attended with a numerous train of captains, lackeys, and coaches filled with women. When we were recovered from the dust raised by this cavalcade, and could continue our discourse without danger of suffocation, I observed to my companion that all this state and equipage, which he seemed to despise, would in China be regarded with the utmost reverence, because such distinctions were always the reward of merit; the greatness of a mandarin's retinue being a most certain mark of the superiority of his abilities or virtue.

"The gentleman who has now passed us," replied my companion, "has no claims from his own merit to distinction; he is possessed neither of abilities nor virtue; it is enough for him that one of his ancestors was possessed of these qualities two hundred years before him. There was a time, indeed, when his family deserved their titles, but they are long since degenerated, and his ancestors for more than a century have been more and more solicitous to keep up the breed of their dogs and horses than that of their children. This very nobleman, simple as he seems, is descended from a race of statesmen and heroes; but, unluckily, his great-grandfather marry-

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point, and, as an improvement of nature, ranks much on a par with the cramping of their women's feet. The only exception exists in the gardens, or rather parks, of the emperor at Yuen-ming-yuen, which Mr. Barrow describes as grand both in plan and extent; but for a subject to emulate these would be almost criminal, even if it were possible."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 367.

ing a cook-maid, and she having a trifling passion for his lordship's groom, they somehow crossed the strain, and produced an heir who took after his mother in his great love to good eating, and his father in a violent affection for horse-flesh. These passions have for some generations passed on from father to son, and are now become the characteristics of the family, his present lordship being equally remarkable for his kitchen and his stable."

"But such a nobleman," cried I, "deserves our pity, thus placed in so high a sphere of life, which only the more exposes to contempt. A king may confer titles, but it is personal merit alone that insures respect. I suppose," added I, "that such men are despised by their equals, neglected by their inferiors, and condemned to live among involuntary dependents in irksome solitude?"

"You are still under a mistake," replied my companion, "for, though this nobleman is a stranger to generosity, though he takes twenty opportunities in a day of letting his guests know how much he despises them; though he is possessed neither of taste, wit, nor wisdom; though incapable of improving others by his conversation, and never known to enrich any by his bounty, yet for all this his company is eagerly sought after: he is a lord, and that is as much as most people desire in a companion. Quality and title have such allurements that hundreds are ready to give up all their own importance, to cringe, to flatter, to look little, and to pall every pleasure in constraint, merely to be among the great, though without the least hopes of improving their understanding or sharing their generosity; they might be happy among their equals, but those are despised for company, where they are despised in turn. You saw what a crowd of humble cousins, card-ruined beaux, and captains on half-pay were willing to make up this great man's retinue down to his country-seat. Not one of all these that could not lead a more comfortable life at home in their little lodging of three shillings a week, with their lukewarm dinner, served up between two pewter plates from a cook's-shop. Yet, poor devils! they are willing to undergo the impertinence and pride of their entertainer merely to be



thought to live among the great ; they are willing to pass the summer in bondage, though conscious they are taken down only to approve his lordship's taste upon every occasion, to tag all his stupid observations with a *very true*, to praise his stable, and descant upon his claret and cookery."

"The pitiful humiliations of the gentlemen you are now describing," said I, "puts me in mind of a custom among the Tartars of Koreki not entirely dissimilar to this we are now considering.<sup>1</sup> The Russians, who trade with them, carry thither a kind of mushrooms, which they exchange for furs of squirrels, ermines, sables, and foxes. These mushrooms the rich Tartars lay up in large quantities for the winter, and when a nobleman makes a mushroom feast all the neighbors around are invited. The mushrooms are prepared by boiling, by which the water acquires an intoxicating quality, and is a sort of drink which the Tartars prize beyond all other. When the nobility and ladies are assembled, and the ceremonies usual between people of distinction over, the mushroom-broth goes freely round ; they laugh, talk *double entendre*, grow fuddled, and become excellent company. The poorer sort, who love mushroom-broth to distraction as well as the rich, but cannot afford it at the first hand, post themselves on these occasions round the huts of the rich, and watch the opportunity of the ladies and gentlemen as they come down to pass their liquor ; and, holding a wooden bowl, catch the delicious fluid, very little altered by filtration, being still strongly tinctured with the intoxicating quality. Of this they drink with the utmost satisfaction, and thus they get as drunk and as jovial as their betters."

"Happy nobility !" cries my companion, "who can fear no diminution of respect, unless by being seized with stranguary, and who when most drunk are most useful ! Though we have not this custom among us, I foresee that if it were introduced we might have many a toad-eater in England ready to drink from the wooden bowl on these occasions, and to

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<sup>1</sup> Van Stralenberg, a writer of credit, gives the same account of his people. Vide "An Historico-geographical Description of the North-eastern Parts of Europe and Asia," etc.—GOLDSMITH.

praise the flavor of his lordship's liquor. As we have different classes of gentry, who knows but we may see a lord holding the bowl to a minister, a knight holding it to his lordship, and a simple squire drinking it double distilled from the loins of knighthood? For my part, I shall never for the future hear a great man's flatterers haranguing in his praise that I shall not fancy I behold the wooden bowl; for I can see no reason why a man who can live easily and happily at home should bear the drudgery of decorum and the impertinence of his entertainer, unless intoxicated with a passion for all that was quality; unless he thought that whatever came from the great was delicious, and had the tincture of the mushroom in it." Adieu.

### LETTER XXXIII.

THE MANNER OF WRITING AMONG THE CHINESE.—THE EASTERN TALES OF MAGAZINES, ETC., RIDICULED.

*From the Same.*

I AM disgusted, O Fum Hoam, even to sickness disgusted. Is it possible to bear the presumption of those islanders, when they pretend to instruct me in the ceremonies of China! They lay it down as a maxim, that every person who comes from thence must express himself in metaphor; swear by Allah, rail against wine, and behave, and talk, and write like a Turk or Persian. They make no distinction between our elegant manners and the voluptuous barbarities of our Eastern neighbors. Wherever I come, I raise either diffidence or astonishment; some fancy me no Chinese, because I am formed more like a man than a monster; and others wonder to find one born five thousand miles from England endued with common-sense. "Strange," say they, "that a man who has received his education at such a distance from London should have common-sense: to be born out of England, and yet have common-sense! Impossible! He must be some Englishman in disguise; his very visage has nothing of the true exotic barbarity."

I yesterday received an invitation from a lady of distinction, who it seems had collected all her knowledge of Eastern manners from fictions every day propagated here, under the titles of Eastern Tales and Oriental Histories. She received me very politely, but seemed to wonder that I neglected bringing opium and a tobacco-box. When chairs were drawn for the rest of the company, I was assigned my place on a cushion on the floor. It was in vain that I protested the Chinese used chairs as in Europe; she understood decorum too well to entertain me with the ordinary civilities.

I had scarcely been seated according to her directions, when the footman was ordered to pin a napkin under my chin; this I protested against as being no way Chinese; however, the whole company, who it seems were a club of connoisseurs, gave it unanimously against me, and the napkin was pinned accordingly.

It was impossible to be angry with people who seemed to err only from an excess of politeness, and I sat contented, expecting their importunities were now at an end; but as soon as ever dinner was served the lady demanded whether I was for a plate of bears' claws<sup>1</sup> or a slice of birds' nests?<sup>2</sup> As these were dishes with which I was utterly unacquainted, I was desirous of eating only what I knew, and therefore begged to be helped from a piece of beef that lay on the side-table. My request at once disconcerted the whole company. A Chinese eat beef! that could never be! there was no local propriety in Chinese beef, whatever there might be in Chinese pheasant. "Sir," said my entertainer, "I think I have some reasons to fancy myself a judge of these matters; in short, the Chinese never eat beef;"<sup>3</sup> so that I must be permitted to recommend the pillau. There was never better

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<sup>1</sup> "The paws of these animals, which abound in fat, are eaten by the Chinese as a delicacy."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. ii. p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> "This is a dish in which the Chinese are perfect epicures. The substance thus served up is reduced into very thin filaments, transparent as isinglass and resembling vermicelli."—*Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 323.

<sup>3</sup> "The general prevalence of Buddhism is probably the reason that beef is scarcely ever used by the Chinese. They, however, make no difficulty whatever of dogs, cats, and even rats."—*Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 334.

dressed at Pekin; the saffron and rice are well boiled, and the spices in perfection."

I had no sooner begun to eat what was laid before me than I found the whole company as much astonished as before: it seems I made no use of my chopsticks. A grave gentleman, whom I take to be an author, harangued very learnedly (as the company seemed to think) upon the use which was made of them in China. He entered into a long argument with himself about their first introduction, without once appealing to me, who might be supposed best capable of silencing the inquiry. As the gentleman, therefore, took my silence for a mark of his own superior sagacity, he was resolved to pursue the triumph; he talked of our cities, mountains, and animals as familiarly as if he had been born in Quamsi, but as erroneously as if a native of the moon. He attempted to prove that I had nothing of the true Chinese cut in my visage; showed that my cheek-bones should have been higher, and my forehead broader. In short, he almost reasoned me out of my country, and effectually persuaded the rest of the company to be of his opinion.

I was going to expose his mistakes, when it was insisted that I had nothing of the true Eastern manner in my delivery. "This gentleman's conversation," says one of the ladies, who was a great reader, "is like our own, mere chit-chat and common-sense: there is nothing like sense in the true Eastern style, where nothing more is required but sublimity. Oh, for a history of Aboulfaouris, the grand voyager—of genii, magicians, rocks, bags of bullets, giants, and enchanters, where all is great, obscure, magnificent, and unintelligible!—" "I have written many a sheet of Eastern tale myself," interrupts the author, "and I defy the severest critic to say but that I have stuck close to the true manner. I have compared a lady's chin to the snow upon the mountains of Bomek; a soldier's sword to the clouds that obscure the face of heaven. If riches are mentioned, I compared them to the flocks that graze the verdant Tefflis; if poverty, to the mists that veil the brow of Mount Baku. I have used *thee* and *thou* upon all occasions; I have described fallen stars,

and splitting mountains, not forgetting the little houris, who make a pretty figure in every description. But you shall hear how I generally begin: 'Eben-ben-bolo, who was the son of Ban, was born on the foggy summits of Benderabassi. His beard was whiter than the feathers which veil the breast of the penguin; his eyes were like the eyes of doves when washed by the dews of the morning; his hair, which hung like the willow weeping over the glassy stream, was so beautiful that it seemed to reflect its own brightness; and his feet were as the feet of a wild deer which fleeth to the tops of the mountains.' There, there is the true Eastern taste for you; every advance made toward sense is only a deviation from sound. Eastern tales should always be sonorous, lofty, musical, and unmeaning."

I could not avoid smiling to hear a native of England attempt to instruct me in the true Eastern idiom; and after he looked round some time for applause, I presumed to ask him whether he had ever travelled into the East, to which he replied in the negative. I demanded whether he understood Chinese or Arabic, to which also he answered as before. "Then, how, sir," said I, "can you pretend to determine upon the Eastern style, who are entirely unacquainted with the Eastern writings? Take, sir, the word of one who is professedly a Chinese, and who is actually acquainted with the Arabian writers, that what is palmed upon you daily for an imitation of Eastern writing no way resembles their manner, either in sentiment or diction. In the East similes are seldom used, and metaphors almost wholly unknown; but in China particularly the very reverse of what you allude to takes place: a cool, phlegmatic method of writing prevails there. The writers of that country, ever more assiduous to instruct than to please, address rather the judgment than the fancy. Unlike many authors of Europe, who have no consideration of the reader's time, they generally leave more to be understood than they express.

"Besides, sir, you must not expect from an inhabitant of China the same ignorance, the same unlettered simplicity, that you find in a Turk, Persian, or native of Peru. The Chinese

are versed in the sciences as well as you, and are masters of several arts unknown to the people of Europe. Many of them are instructed not only in their own national learning, but are perfectly well acquainted with the languages and learning of the West. If my word in such a case is not to be taken, consult your own travellers on this head, who affirm that the scholars of Pekin and Siam sustain theological theses in Latin. 'The college of Masprend, which is but a league from Siam,' says one of your travellers, 'came in a body to salute our ambassador. Nothing gave me more sincere pleasure than to behold a number of priests, venerable both from age and modesty, followed by a number of youths of all nations—Chinese, Japanese, Tonquinese, of Cochin-China, Pegu, and Siam—all willing to pay their respects in the most polite manner imaginable. A Cochin-Chinese made an excellent Latin oration upon this occasion; he was succeeded and even outdone by a student of Tonquin, who was as well skilled in the Western learning as any scholar of Paris.' Now, sir, if youths who never stirred from home are so perfectly skilled in your laws and learning, surely more must be expected from one like me, who have travelled so many thousand miles, who have conversed familiarly for several years with the English factors established at Canton, and the missionaries sent us from every part of Europe. The unaffected of every country nearly resemble each other; and a page of our Confucius and of your Tillotson have scarce any material difference. Paltry affectation, strained allusions, and disgusting finery are easily attained by those who choose to wear them; and they are but too frequently the badges of ignorance or of stupidity, whenever it would endeavor to please."

I was proceeding in my discourse, when, looking round, I perceived the company no way attentive to what I attempted with so much earnestness to enforce. One lady was whispering her that sat next, another was studying the merits of a fan, a third began to yawn, and the author himself fell fast asleep.

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<sup>1</sup> "Journal, ou Suite du Voyage de Siam, en forme de Lettres familières, fait en 1685 et 1686, par N. L. D. C., p. 174, edit. Amstelod. 1686."—GOLDSMITH.

I thought it, therefore, high time to make a retreat; nor did the company seem to show any regret at my preparations for departure; even the lady who had invited me with the most mortifying insensibility saw me seize my hat and rise from my cushion; nor was I invited to repeat my visit, because it was found that I aimed at appearing rather a reasonable creature than an outlandish idiot. Adieu.

## LETTER XXXIV.

OF THE PRESENT RIDICULOUS PASSION OF THE NOBILITY FOR  
PAINTING.

*To the Same.*

THE polite arts are in this country subject to as many revolutions as its laws or politics; not only the objects of fancy and dress, but even of delicacy and taste, are directed by the capricious influence of fashion. I am told there has been a time when poetry was universally encouraged by the great, when men of the first rank not only patronized the poet, but produced the finest models for his imitation. It was then the English sent forth those glowing rhapsodies which we have so often read over together with rapture; poems big with all the sublimity of Mencius,<sup>1</sup> and supported by reasoning as strong as that of Zimpo.

The nobility are ever fond of wisdom, but they are also fond of having it without study; to read poetry required

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<sup>1</sup> "Ranking next to Confucius (*similis aut secundus*) is the celebrated Mencius, so called by the Jesuits, from his Chinese name, Meng-tse. He lived about a century after his great predecessor, whose doctrines he still further illustrated and promoted, and left behind him the *fourth* of the sacred books bearing his own name. Mencius lived to the age of eighty-four. Kea-tsing, an emperor of the Ming dynasty, made one of his real or supposed descendants in the *fifty-sixth* generation a member of the Hânlin college. 'If,' as Dr. Morrison observes, 'the persons who now profess to be the posterity of Confucius and Mencius be really so, their families are probably the most ancient in the world.' It would be difficult to find even a Welsh pedigree to compete with them."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. ii. p. 55.

thought, and the English nobility were not fond of thinking; they soon, therefore, placed their affections upon music, because in this they might indulge a happy vacancy, and yet still have pretensions to delicacy and taste as before. They soon brought their numerous dependents into an approbation of their pleasures, who in turn led their thousand imitators to feel or feign a similitude of passion. Colonies of singers were now imported from abroad at a vast expense, and it was expected the English would soon be able to set examples to Europe. All these expectations, however, were soon dissipated. In spite of the zeal which fired the great, the ignorant vulgar refused to be taught to sing, refused to undergo the ceremonies which were to initiate them in the singing fraternity; thus the colony from abroad dwindled by degrees, for they were of themselves unfortunately incapable of propagating the breed.

Music having thus lost its splendor, painting is now become the sole object of fashionable care. The title of connoisseur in that art is at present the safest passport into every fashionable society; a well-timed shrug, an admiring attitude, and one or two exotic tones of exclamation are sufficient qualifications for men of low circumstances to curry favor. Even some of the young nobility are themselves early instructed in handling the pencil, while their happy parents, big with expectation, foresee the walls of every apartment covered with the manufactures of their posterity.

But many of the English are not content with giving all their time to this art at home; some young men of distinction are found to travel through Europe, with no other intent than that of understanding and collecting pictures, studying seals, and describing statues. On they travel from this cabinet of curiosities to that gallery of pictures; waste the prime of life in wonder; skilful in pictures, ignorant in men; yet impossible to be reclaimed, because their follies take shelter under the names of delicacy and taste.

It is true, painting should have due encouragement; as the painter can undoubtedly fit up our apartments in a much more elegant manner than the upholsterer; but I should



think a man of fashion makes but an indifferent exchange, who lays out all that time in furnishing his house which he should have employed in the furniture of his head. A person who shows no other symptoms of taste than his cabinet or gallery, might as well boast to me of the furniture of his kitchen.<sup>1</sup>

I know no other motive but vanity that induces the great to testify such an inordinate passion for pictures: after the piece is bought, and gazed at eight or ten days successively, the purchaser's pleasure must surely be over; all the satisfaction he can then have is to show it to others; he may be considered as the guardian of a treasure of which he makes no manner of use: his gallery is furnished, not for himself, but the connoisseur, who is generally some humble flatterer, ready to feign a rapture he does not feel, and as necessary to the happiness of a picture-buyer, as gazers are to the magnificence of an Asiatic procession.

I have enclosed a letter from a youth of distinction, on his travels, to his father in England; in which he appears addicted to no vice, seems obedient to his governor, of a good natural disposition, and fond of improvement; but at the same time, early taught to regard cabinets and galleries as the only proper schools of improvement, and to consider a skill in pictures as the properest knowledge for a man of quality:

“MY LORD,—We have been but two days at Antwerp; wherefore I have sat down as soon as possible to give you some account of what we have seen since our arrival, desirous of letting no opportunity pass without writing to so good a father. Immediately upon alighting from our Rotterdam machine, my governor, who is immoderately fond of paintings, and at the same time an excellent judge, would let no time pass till we paid our respects to the church of the Virgin-mother, which contains treasure beyond estimation. We took

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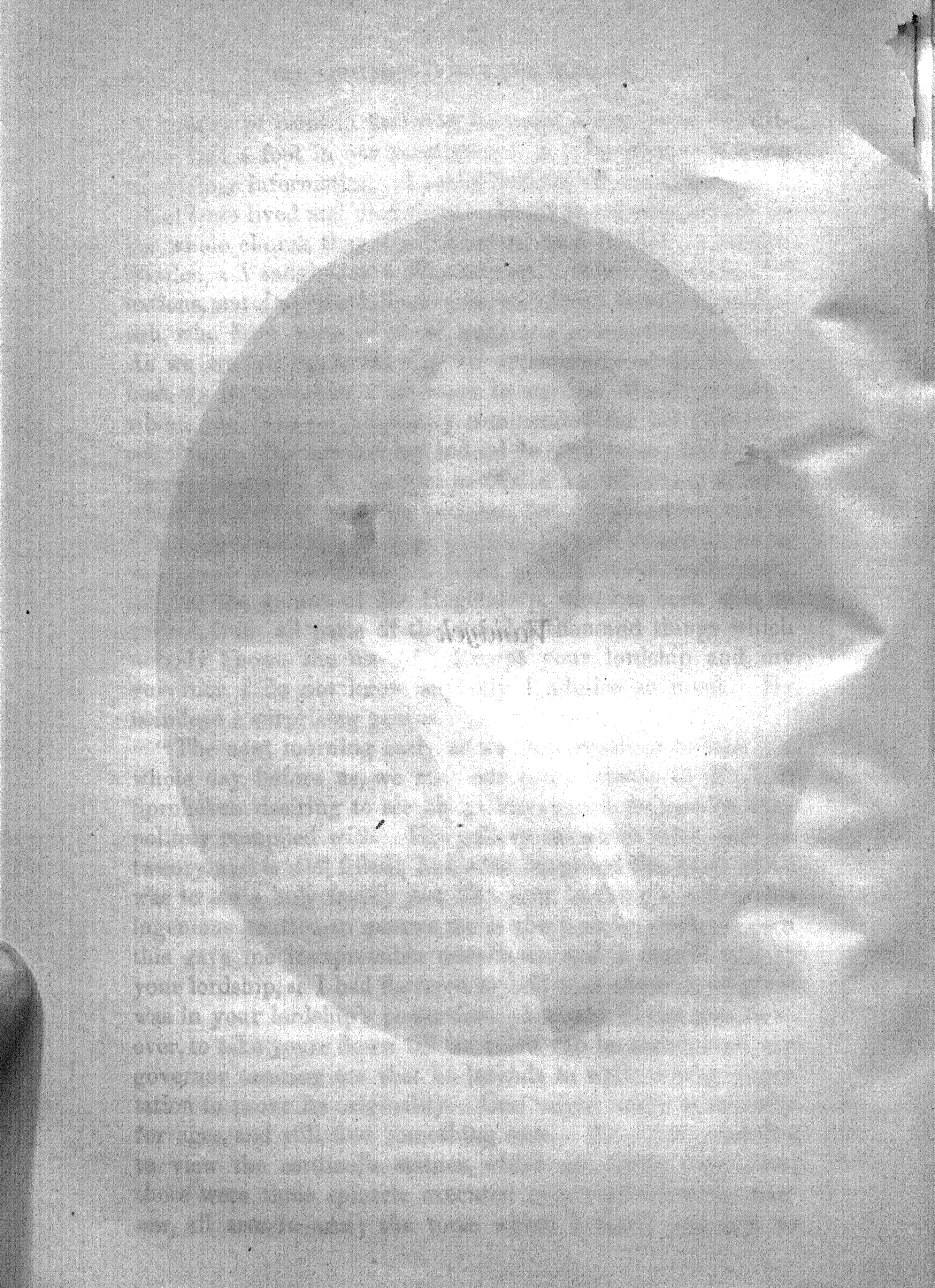
<sup>1</sup> “I can have no expectations in an address of this kind either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel.”—GOLDSMITH, *Dedication of The Deserted Village* to Sir Joshua Reynolds.

an infinity of pains in knowing its exact dimensions, and differed half a foot in our calculation; so I leave that to some succeeding information. I really believe my governor and I could have lived and died there. There is scarcely a pillar in the whole church that is not adorned by a Rubens, a Vander Meulen, a Vandyke, or a Wouverman. What attitudes, carnations, and draperies! I am almost induced to pity the English, who have none of those exquisite pieces among them. As we are willing to let slip no opportunity of doing business, we immediately after went to wait on Mr. Hogendorp, whom you have so frequently commended for his judicious collection. His cameos are indeed beyond price; his intaglios not so good. He showed us one of an officiating flamen, which he thought to be an antique; but my governor, who is not to be deceived in these particulars, soon found it to be an arrant *cinque cento*. I could not, however, sufficiently admire the genius of Mr. Hogendorp, who has been able to collect, from all parts of the world, a thousand things which nobody knows the use of. Except your lordship and my governor, I do not know anybody I admire so much. He is indeed a surprising genius.

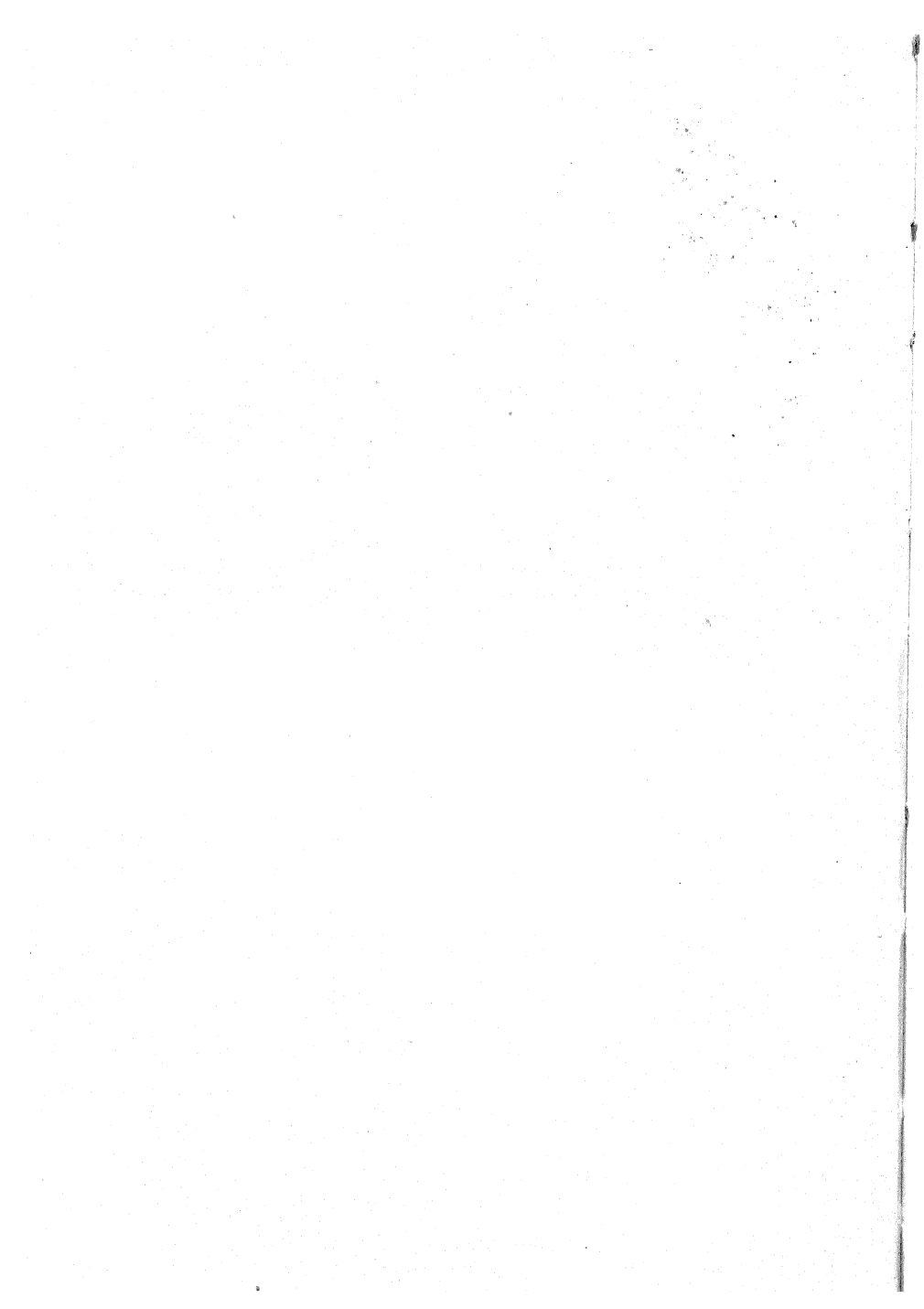
“The next morning early, as we were resolved to take the whole day before us, we sent our compliments to Mr. Van Sprokcken, desiring to see his gallery, which request he very politely complied with. His gallery measures fifty feet by twenty, and is well filled; but what surprised the most of all was to see a holy family just like your lordship’s, which this ingenious gentleman assures me is the true original. I own this gave me inexpressible uneasiness, and I fear it will to your lordship, as I had flattered myself that the only original was in your lordship’s possession. I would advise you, however, to take yours down till its merit can be ascertained, my governor assuring me that he intends to write a long dissertation to prove its originality. One might study in this city for ages, and still find something new. We went from this to view the cardinal’s statues, which are really very fine; there were three spintria executed in a very masterly manner, all arm-in-arm; the torse which I heard you talk so



*Vandyck*







much of it is at last discovered to be a Hercules spinning, and not a Cleopatra bathing, as your lordship had conjectured. There has been a treatise written to prove it.

"My Lord Firmly is certainly a Goth, a Vandal—no taste in the world for painting. I wonder how any call him a man of taste. Passing through the streets of Antwerp a few days ago, and observing the nakedness of the inhabitants, he was so barbarous as to observe, that he thought the best method the Flemings could take was to sell their pictures and buy clothes. Ah, Cogliopie! We shall go to-morrow to Mr. Carwarden's cabinet, and the next day we shall see the curiosities collected by Van Ran; and the day after we shall pay a visit to Mount Calvary, and after that— But I find my paper finished; so, with the most sincere wishes for your lordship's happiness, and with hopes, after having seen Italy, that centre of pleasure, to return home worthy the care and expense which has been generously laid out in my improvement, I remain, my lord, yours," etc.

### LETTER XXXV.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S SON DESCRIBES A LADY, HIS FELLOW-CAPTIVE.

*From Hingpo, a slave in Persia, to Altangi, a travelling philosopher of China, by the way of Moscow.*

FORTUNE has made me the slave of another, but nature and inclination render me entirely subservient to you; a tyrant commands my body, but you are master of my heart. And yet let not thy inflexible nature condemn me when I confess that I find my soul shrink with my circumstances. I feel my mind not less than my body bend beneath the rigors of servitude; the master whom I serve grows every day more formidable. In spite of reason, which should teach me to despise him, his hideous image fills even my dreams with horror.

A few days ago, a Christian slave, who wrought in the gardens, happening to enter an arbor where the tyrant was entertaining the ladies of his harem with coffee, the unhappy

captive was instantly stabbed to the heart for his intrusion. I have been preferred to his place, which, though less laborious than my former station, is yet more ungrateful, as it brings me nearer him whose presence excites sensations at once of disgust and apprehension.

Into what a state of misery are the modern Persians fallen ! A nation famous for setting the world an example of freedom is now become a land of tyrants and a den of slaves.<sup>1</sup> The houseless Tartar of Kamtchatka, who enjoys his herbs and his fish in unmolested freedom, may be envied, if compared to the thousands who pine here in hopeless servitude, and curse the day that gave them being. Is this just dealing, Heaven ! to render millions wretched to swell up the happiness of a few ? Cannot the powerful of this earth be happy without our sighs and tears ? Must every luxury of the great be woven from the calamities of the poor ? It must, it must surely be that this jarring, discordant life is but the prelude to some future harmony : the soul, attuned to virtue here, shall go from hence to fill up the universal choir where Tien presides in person ; where there shall be no tyrants to frown, no shackles to bind, nor no whips to threaten ; where I shall once more meet my father with rapture, and give a loose to filial piety ; where I shall hang on his neck, and hear the wisdom of his lips, and thank him for all the happiness to which he has introduced me.

The wretch whom fortune has made my master has lately purchased several slaves of both sexes ; among the rest I hear a Christian captive talked of with admiration. The eunuch who bought her, and who is accustomed to survey beauty with indifference, speaks of her with emotion. Her pride, however, astonishes her attendant slaves not less than her beauty. It is reported that she refuses the warmest solicitations of her haughty lord ; he has even offered to make her one of his four wives upon changing her religion and conforming to his. It is probable she cannot refuse such extraor-

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<sup>1</sup> " A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,  
Her wretches seek dishonorable graves."—*The Traveller*.



dinary offers, and her delay is perhaps intended to enhance her favors.

I have just now seen her; she inadvertently approached the place without a veil where I sat writing. She seemed to regard the heavens alone with fixed attention: there her most ardent gaze was directed. Genius of the sun! what unexpected softness! what animated grace! her beauty seemed the transparent covering of virtue. Celestial beings could not wear a look of more perfection, while sorrow humanized her form, and mixed my admiration with pity. I rose from the bank on which I sat, and she retired; happy that none observed us, for such an interview might have been fatal.

I have regarded, till now, the opulence and the power of my tyrant without envy. I saw him with a mind incapable of enjoying the gift of fortune, and consequently regarded him as one loaded, rather than enriched, with its favors; but at present, when I think that so much beauty is reserved only for him; that so many charms should be lavished on a wretch incapable of feeling the greatness of the blessing, I own I feel a reluctance to which I have hitherto been a stranger.

But let not my father impute those uneasy sensations to so trifling a cause as love. No, never let it be thought that your son, and the pupil of the wise Fum Hoam, could stoop to so degrading a passion. I am only displeased at seeing so much excellence so unjustly disposed of.

The uneasiness which I feel is not for myself, but for the beautiful Christian. When I reflect on the barbarity of him for whom she is designed, I pity, indeed I pity her; when I think that she must only share one heart, who deserves to command a thousand, excuse me if I feel an emotion which universal benevolence extorts from me. As I am convinced that you take a pleasure in those sallies of humanity, and are particularly pleased with compassion, I could not avoid discovering the sensibility with which I felt this beautiful stranger's distress. I have for a while forgot, in hers, the miseries of my own hopeless situation: the tyrant grows every day more severe; and love, which softens all other minds into tenderness, seems only to have increased his severity. Adieu.

## LETTER XXXVI.

THE BEAUTIFUL CAPTIVE CONSENTS TO MARRY HER LORD.

*From the Same.*

THE whole harem is filled with a tumultuous joy. Zelis, the beautiful captive, has consented to embrace the religion of Mohammed, and become one of the wives of the fastidious Persian. It is impossible to describe the transport that sits on every face on this occasion. Music and feasting fill every apartment; the most miserable slave seems to forget his chains, and sympathizes with the happiness of Mostadad. The herb we tread beneath our feet is not made more for our use than every slave around him for their imperious master; mere machines of obedience, they wait with silent assiduity, feel his pains, and rejoice in his exultation. Heavens! how much is requisite to make one man happy!

Twelve of the most beautiful slaves, and I among the number, have got orders to prepare for carrying him in triumph to the bridal apartment. The blaze of perfumed torches is to imitate the day; the dancers and singers are hired at a vast expense. The nuptials are to be celebrated on the approaching feast of Barboura, when a hundred taels in gold are to be distributed among the barren wives, in order to pray for fertility from the approaching union.

What will not riches procure! A hundred domestics, who curse the tyrant in their souls, are commanded to wear a face of joy, and they are joyful. A hundred flatterers are ordered to attend, and they fill his ears with praise. Beauty, all-commanding beauty, sues for admittance, and scarcely receives an answer: even love itself seems to wait upon fortune, or, though the passion be only feigned, yet it wears every appearance of sincerity; and what greater pleasure can even true sincerity confer, or what would the rich have more?

Nothing can exceed the intended magnificence of the bridegroom but the costly dresses of the bride: six eunuchs in the most sumptuous habits are to conduct him to the nuptial couch, and wait his orders. Six ladies, in all the magnificence of Persia, are directed to undress the bride. Their business is to assist, to encourage her, to divest her of every encumbering part of her dress—all but the last covering, which, by an artful complication of ribbons, is purposely made difficult to unloose, and with which she is to part reluctantly even to the joyful possessor of her beauty.

Mostadad, O my father, is no philosopher; and yet he seems perfectly contented with ignorance. Possessed of numberless slaves, camels, and women, he desires no greater possession. He never opened the page of Mencius, and yet all the slaves tell me that he is happy.

Forgive the weakness of my nature if I sometimes feel my heart rebellious to the dictates of wisdom, and eager for happiness like his. Yet why wish for his wealth with his ignorance—to be, like him, incapable of sentimental pleasures, incapable of feeling the happiness of making others happy, incapable of teaching the beautiful Zelis philosophy?

What! shall I, in a transport of passion, give up the golden mean, the universal harmony, the unchanging essence, for the possession of a hundred camels, as many slaves, thirty-five beautiful horses, and seventy-three fine women? First blast me to the centre! degrade me beneath the most degraded! pare my nails, ye powers of Heaven! ere I would stoop to such an exchange. What! part with philosophy, which teaches me to suppress my passions instead of gratifying them, which teaches me even to divest my soul of passion, which teaches serenity in the midst of tortures; philosophy, by which even now I am so very serene, and so very much at ease, to be persuaded to part with it for any other enjoyment! Never, never, even though persuasion spoke in the accents of Zelis!

A female slave informs me that the bride is to be arrayed in a tissue of silver, and her hair adorned with the largest pearls of Ormus. But why tease you with particulars in which we both are so little concerned? The pain I feel in

separation throws a gloom over my mind, which in this scene of universal joy I fear may be attributed to some other cause. How wretched are those who are, like me, denied even the last resource of misery—their tears! Adieu.

### LETTER XXXVII.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S SON BEGINS TO BE DISGUSTED IN THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM.—AN ALLEGORY TO PROVE ITS FUTILITY.

*From the Same.*

I BEGIN to have doubts whether wisdom be alone sufficient to make us happy: whether every step we make in refinement is not an inlet into new disquietudes. A mind too vigorous and active serves only to consume the body to which it is joined, as the richest jewels are soonest found to wear their settings.

When we rise in knowledge, as the prospect widens the objects of our regard become more obscure, and the unlettered peasant, whose views are only directed to the narrow sphere around him, beholds Nature with a finer relish, and tastes her blessings with a keener appetite, than the philosopher whose mind attempts to grasp a universal system.

As I was some days ago pursuing this subject among a circle of my fellow-slaves, an ancient Guebre of the number, equally remarkable for his piety and wisdom, seemed touched with my conversation, and desired to illustrate what I had been saying with an allegory taken from the Zend-Avesta of Zoroaster. "By this we shall be taught," says he, "that they who travel in pursuit of wisdom walk only in a circle, and after all their labor at last return to their pristine ignorance; and in this also we shall see that enthusiastic confidence or unsatisfying doubts terminate all our inquiries.

"In early times, before myriads of nations covered the earth, the whole human race lived together in one valley. The simple inhabitants, surrounded on every side by lofty moun-

tains, knew no other world but the little spot to which they were confined. They fancied the heavens bent down to meet the mountain tops, and formed an impenetrable wall to surround them. None had ever yet ventured to climb the steepy cliff in order to explore those regions that lay beyond it; they knew the nature of the skies only from a tradition, which mentioned their being made of adamant. Traditions make up the reasonings of the simple, and serve to silence every inquiry.

"In this sequestered vale, blessed with all the spontaneous productions of nature—the honeyed blossom, the refreshing breeze, the gliding brook, and golden fruitage—the simple inhabitants seemed happy in themselves, in each other; they desired no greater pleasure, for they knew of none greater; ambition, pride, and envy were vices unknown among them; and from this peculiar simplicity of its possessors the country was called the Valley of Ignorance.

"At length, however, an unhappy youth, more aspiring than the rest, undertook to climb the mountain's side, and examine the summits which were hitherto deemed inaccessible. The inhabitants from below gazed with wonder at his intrepidity; some applauded his courage, others censured his folly; still, however, he proceeded towards the place where the earth and heavens seemed to unite, and at length arrived at the wished-for height, with extreme labor and assiduity.

"His first surprise was to find the skies not, as he expected, within his reach, but still as far off as before; his amazement increased when he saw a wide-extended region lying on the opposite side of the mountain; but it rose to astonishment when he beheld a country at a distance more beautiful and alluring than even that he had just left behind.

"As he continued to gaze with wonder, a genius, with a look of infinite modesty, approaching, offered to be his guide and instructor. 'The distant country, which you so much admire,' says the angelic being, 'is called the Land of Certainty; in that charming retreat sentiment contributes to refine every sensual banquet; the inhabitants are blessed with every solid enjoyment, and still more blessed in a perfect conscious-

ness of their own felicity; ignorance in that country is wholly unknown; all there is satisfaction without alloy, for every pleasure first undergoes the examination of reason. As for me, I am called the Genius of Demonstration, and am stationed here in order to conduct every adventurer to that land of happiness through those intervening regions you see overhung with fogs and darkness, and horrid with forests, cataracts, caverns, and various other shapes of danger. But follow me, and in time I may lead you to that distant desirable land of tranquillity.'

"The intrepid traveller immediately put himself under the direction of the genius, and both journeying on together with a slow but agreeable pace, deceived the tediousness of the way by conversation. The beginning of the journey seemed to promise true satisfaction, but as they proceeded forward the skies became more gloomy and the way more intricate; they often inadvertently approached the brow of some frightful precipice, or the brink of a torrent, and were obliged to measure back their former way. The gloom increasing as they proceeded, their pace became more slow; they paused at every step, frequently stumbled, and their distrust and timidity increased. The Genius of Demonstration now, therefore, advised his pupil to grope upon hands and feet, as a method, though more slow, yet less liable to error.

"In this manner they attempted to pursue their journey for some time, when they were overtaken by another genius, who, with a precipitate pace, seemed travelling the same way. He was instantly known by the other to be the Genius of Probability. He wore two wide-extended wings at his back, which incessantly waved without increasing the rapidity of his motion; his countenance betrayed a confidence that the ignorant might mistake for sincerity, and he had but one eye, which was fixed in the middle of his forehead.

"'Servant of Hormizda,' cried he, approaching the mortal pilgrim, 'if thou art travelling to the Land of Certainty, how is it possible to arrive there under the guidance of a genius who proceeds forward so slowly, and is so little acquainted

with the way? Follow me; we shall soon perform the journey to where every pleasure awaits our arrival.'

"The peremptory tone in which this genius spoke, and the speed with which he moved forward, induced the traveller to change his conductor, and leaving his modest companion behind, he proceeded forward with his more confident director, seeming not a little pleased at the increased velocity of his motion.

"But soon he found reasons to repent. Whenever a torrent crossed their way his guide taught him to despise the obstacle by plunging him in; whenever a precipice presented he was directed to fling himself forward. Thus, each moment miraculously escaping, his repeated escapes only served to increase his guide's temerity. He led him, therefore, forwards, amid infinite difficulties, till they arrived at the borders of an ocean, which appeared unnavigable from the black mists that lay upon its surface. Its unquiet waves were of the darkest hue, and gave a lively representation of the various agitations of the human mind.

"The Genius of Probability now confessed his temerity, owned his being an improper guide to the Land of Certainty, a country where no mortal had ever been permitted to arrive; but at the same time offered to supply the traveller with another conductor, who should carry him to the Land of Confidence, a region where the inhabitants lived with the utmost tranquillity, and tasted almost as much satisfaction as if in the Land of Certainty. Not waiting for a reply, he stamped three times on the ground, and called forth the Demon of Error, a gloomy fiend of the servants of Arimanes. The yawning earth gave up the reluctant savage, who seemed unable to bear the light of the day. His stature was enormous, his color black and hideous; his aspect betrayed a thousand varying passions, and he spread forth pinions that were fitted for the most rapid flight. The traveller at first was shocked at the spectre; but finding him obedient to superior power, he assumed his former tranquillity.

"'I have called you to duty,' cries the genius to the demon, 'to bear on your back a son of mortality over the Ocean

of Doubts into the Land of Confidence ; I expect you'll perform your commission with punctuality. And as for you,' continued the genius, addressing the traveller, 'when once I have bound this fillet round your eyes, let no voice of persuasion, nor threats the most terrifying, induce you to unbind it in order to look round ; keep the fillet fast, look not at the ocean below, and you may certainly expect to arrive at a region of pleasure.'

"Thus saying, and the traveller's eyes being covered, the demon, muttering curses, raised him on his back, and, instantly upborne by his strong pinions, directed his flight among the clouds. Neither the loudest thunder nor the most angry tempest could persuade the traveller to unbind his eyes. The demon directed his flight downwards, and skimmed the surface of the ocean ; a thousand voices, some with loud invectives, others in the sarcastic tones of contempt, vainly endeavored to persuade him to look round ; but he still continued to keep his eyes covered, and would in all probability have arrived at the happy land had not flattery effected what other means could not perform ; for now he heard himself welcomed on every side to the promised land, and a universal shout of joy was sent forth at his safe arrival. The wearied traveller, desirous of seeing the long-wished-for country, at length pulled the fillet from his eyes and ventured to look round him. But he had unloosed the band too soon ; he was not yet above half-way over. The demon, who was still hovering in the air, and had produced those sounds only in order to deceive, was now freed from his commission ; wherefore, throwing the astonished traveller from his back, the unhappy youth fell headlong into the subjacent Ocean of Doubts, from whence he never after was seen to rise."



## LETTER XXXVIII.

THE CHINESE PHILOSOPHER PRAISES THE JUSTICE OF A LATE  
BRITISH SENTENCE.

*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial  
Academy at Pekin, in China.*

WHEN Parmenio, the Grecian, had done something which excited a universal shout from the surrounding multitude, he was instantly struck with the doubt that what had their approbation must certainly be wrong; and, turning to a philosopher who stood near him, "Pray, sir," says he, "pardon me; I fear I have been guilty of some absurdity."

You know that I am not less than him a despiser of the multitude; you know that I equally detest flattery to the great; yet so many circumstances have concurred to give a lustre to the latter part of the present English monarch's reign, that I cannot withhold my contribution of praise; I cannot avoid acknowledging the crowd, for once, just in their unanimous approbation.

Yet think not the battles gained, dominion extended, or enemies brought to submission are the virtues which at present claim my admiration. Were the reigning monarch only famous for his victories, I should regard his character with indifference; the boast of heroism in this enlightened age is justly regarded as a qualification of a very subordinate rank, and mankind now begin to look with becoming horror on these foes to man. The virtue in this aged monarch, which I have at present in view, is one of a much more exalted nature, is one the most difficult of attainment, is the least praised, of all kingly virtues, and yet deserves the greatest praise: the virtue I mean is justice—a strict administration of justice, without severity and without favor.

Of all virtues this is the most difficult to be practised by

a king who has a power to pardon. All men, even tyrants themselves, lean to mercy when unbiassed by passions or interest; the heart naturally persuades to forgiveness, and, pursuing the dictates of this pleasing deceiver, we are led to prefer our private satisfaction to public utility. What a thorough love for the public, what a strong command over the passions, what a finely-conducted judgment must he possess, who opposes the dictates of reason to those of his heart, and prefers the future interest of his people to his own immediate satisfaction!

If still, to a man's own natural bias for tenderness, we add the numerous solicitations made by a criminal's friends for mercy; if we survey a king not only opposing his own feelings, but reluctantly refusing those he regards, and this to satisfy the public, whose cries he may never hear, whose gratitude he may never receive—this surely is true greatness! Let us fancy ourselves for a moment in this just old man's place, surrounded by numbers, all soliciting the same favor, a favor that nature disposes us to grant, where the inducements to pity are laid before us in the strongest light, suppliants at our feet, some ready to resent a refusal, none opposing a compliance; let us, I say, suppose ourselves in such a situation, and I fancy we should find ourselves more apt to act the character of good-natured men than of upright magistrates.

What contributes to raise justice above all other kindly virtues is, that it is seldom attended with a due share of applause, and those who practise it must be influenced by greater motives than empty fame: the people are generally well pleased with a remission of punishment, and all that wears the appearance of humanity; it is the wise alone who are capable of discerning that impartial justice is the truest mercy; they know it to be very difficult at once to compassionate and yet condemn an object that pleads for tenderness.

I have been led into this commonplace train of thought by a late striking instance in this country of the impartiality of justice, and of the king's inflexible resolution of inflicting punishment where it was justly due. A man of the first

quality,<sup>1</sup> in a fit either of passion, melancholy, or madness, murdered his servant: it was expected that his station in life would have lessened the ignominy of his punishment; however, he was arraigned, condemned, and underwent the same degrading death with the meanest malefactor. It was well considered that virtue alone is true nobility; and that he whose actions sink him even beneath the vulgar has no right to those distinctions which should be the rewards only of merit: it was, perhaps, considered that crimes were more heinous among the higher classes of people, as necessity exposes them to fewer temptations.

Over all the East, even China not excepted, a person of the same quality guilty of such a crime might, by giving up a share of his fortune to the judge, buy off his sentence. There are several countries, even in Europe, where the servant is entirely the property of his master: if a slave kills his lord, he dies by the most execrating tortures; but if the circumstances are reversed, a small fine buys off the punishment of the offender. Happy the country where all are equal, and where those who sit as judges have too much integrity to receive a bribe, and too much honor to pity, from a similitude of the prisoner's title or circumstances with their own! Such is England; yet think not that it was always equally famed for this strict impartiality. There was a time, even here, when title softened the rigors of the law, when dignified wretches were suffered to live, and continue for years an equal disgrace to justice and nobility.

To this day, in a neighboring country, the great are often most scandalously pardoned for the most scandalous offences. A person is still alive among them who has more than once deserved the most ignominious severity of justice.<sup>2</sup> His being of the blood royal, however, was thought a sufficient atone-

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Ferrers, hanged at Tyburn, 5th May, 1760, for murdering his steward. "Two petitions from the earl's mother and all his family were presented to the king; who said, as the House of Lords had unanimously found him guilty, he would not interfere."—HORACE WALPOLE to *Sir Horace Mann*, vol. iii. p. 353. See also *The Citizen of the World*, Letter XLV. p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> The Prince of Charolais.

ment for his being a disgrace to humanity. This remarkable personage took pleasure in shooting at the passengers below, from the top of his palace; and in this most princely amusement he usually spent some time every day. He was at length arraigned by the friends of a person whom in this manner he had killed, and was found guilty of the charge, and condemned to die. His merciful monarch pardoned him in consideration of his rank and quality. The unrepenting criminal soon after renewed his usual entertainment, and in the same manner killed another man. He was a second time condemned; and, strange to think, a second time received his majesty's pardon! Would you believe it? A third time the very same man was guilty of the very same offence; a third time, therefore, the laws of his country found him guilty—I wish for the honor of humanity I could suppress the rest—a third time he was pardoned! Will you not think such a story too extraordinary for belief? will you not think me describing the savage inhabitants of Congo? Alas! the story is but too true, and the country where it was transacted regards itself as the politest in Europe! Adieu.

## LETTER XXXIX.

DESCRIPTION OF TRUE POLITENESS.—TWO LETTERS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, BY LADIES FALSELY THOUGHT POLITE AT HOME.

*From Lien Chi Altangi to ———, Merchant, in Amsterdam.*

CEREMONIES are different in every country; but true politeness is everywhere the same. Ceremonies, which take up so much of our attention, are only artificial helps which ignorance assumes, in order to imitate politeness, which is the result of good-sense and good-nature. A person possessed of those qualities, though he had never seen a court, is truly agreeable; and if without them would continue a clown, though he had been all his life a gentleman-usher.

How would a Chinese, bred up in the formalities of an

Eastern court, be regarded, should he carry all his good-manners beyond the Great Wall? How would an Englishman, skilled in all the decorums of Western good-breeding, appear at an Eastern entertainment: would he not be reckoned more fantastically savage than even his unbred footman?

Ceremony resembles that base coin which circulates through a country by the royal mandate: it serves every purpose of real money at home, but is entirely useless if carried abroad; a person who should attempt to circulate his native trash in another country would be thought either ridiculous or culpable. He is truly well-bred who knows when to value and when to despise those national peculiarities which are regarded by some with so much observance: a traveller of taste at once perceives that the wise are polite all the world over, but that fools are polite only at home.

I have now before me two very fashionable letters upon the same subject, both written by ladies of distinction; one of whom leads the fashion in England, and the other sets the ceremonies of China: they are both regarded in their respective countries by all the beau-monde as standards of taste and models of true politeness, and both give us a true idea of what they imagine elegant in their admirers. Which of them understands true politeness, or whether either, you shall be at liberty to determine. The English lady writes thus to her female confidante:

“As I live, my dear Charlotte, I believe the colonel will carry it at last; he is a most irresistible fellow, that's flat. So well-dressed, so neat, so sprightly, and plays about one so agreeably, that I vow he has as much spirits as the Marquis of Monkeyman's Italian greyhound. I first saw him at Ranelagh; he shines there: he is nothing without Ranelagh, and Ranelagh nothing without him. The next day he sent a card and compliments, desiring to wait on mamma and me to the music subscription. He looked all the time with such irresistible impudence, that positively he had something in his face gave me as much pleasure as a pair-royal of naturals in my own hand. He waited on mamma and me the next morn-

ing to know how we got home: you must know the insidious devil makes love to us both. Rap went the footman at the door; bounce went my heart: I thought he would have rattled the house down. Chariot drove up to the window, with his footmen in the prettiest liveries: he has infinite taste, that's flat. Mamma has spent all the morning at her head; but for my part I was in an undress to receive him; quite easy, mind that; no way disturbed at his approach; mamma pretended to be as *dégagée* as I, and yet I saw her blush in spite of her. Positively he is a most killing devil! We did nothing but laugh all the time he stayed with us; I never heard so many very good things before. At first he mistook mamma for my sister, at which she laughed; then he mistook my natural complexion for paint, at which I laughed; and then he showed us a picture in the lid of his snuffbox, at which we all laughed. He plays piquet so very ill, and is so very fond of cards, and loses with such a grace, that positively he has won me; I have got a cool hundred, but have lost my heart. I need not tell you that he is only a colonel of the train-bands.

I am, dear Charlotte, yours forever,

“BELINDA.”

The Chinese lady addresses her confidante, a poor relation of the family, upon the same occasion; in which she seems to understand decorums even better than the Western beauty. You, who have resided so long in China, will readily acknowledge the picture to be taken from nature; and, by being acquainted with the Chinese customs, will better apprehend the lady's meaning.

*From Yaoua to Yaya.*

“Papa insists upon one, two, three, four hundred taels from the colonel, my lover, before he parts with a lock of my hair! Oh, how I wish the dear creature may be able to produce the money and pay papa my fortune. The colonel is reckoned the politest man in all Shensi. The first visit he paid at our house, mercy! what stooping, and cringing, and stopping, and fidgeting, and going back, and creeping forward, there was be-

tween him and papa; one would have thought he had got the seventeen books of ceremonies all by heart. When he was come into the hall he flourished his hands three times in a very graceful manner. Papa, who would not be outdone, flourished his four times; upon this the colonel began again, and both thus continued flourishing for some minutes in the politest manner imaginable.<sup>1</sup> I was posted in the usual place behind the screen, where I saw the whole ceremony through a slit. Of this the colonel was sensible, for papa informed him. I would have given the world to have shown him my little shoes, but had no opportunity. It was the first time I had ever the happiness of seeing any man but papa, and I vow, my dear Yaya, I thought my three souls would have actually fled from my lips. Ho! but he looked most charmingly; he is reckoned the best-shaped man in the whole province, for he is very fat and very short; but even those natural advantages are improved by his dress, which is fashionable past description. His head was close shaven, all but the crown, and the hair of that was braided into a most beautiful tail that, reaching down to his heels, was terminated by a bunch of yellow roses.<sup>2</sup> Upon his first entering the room I could easily perceive he had been highly perfumed with assafoetida. But then his looks—his looks, my dear Yaya, were irresistible. He kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on the wall during the whole ceremony, and I sincerely believe no accident could have discomposed his gravity, or drawn his eyes away. After a polite silence of two hours he gallantly begged to have the singing women introduced, purely for my amuse-

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<sup>1</sup> In China the ordinary ceremony among equals is to join the closed hands and lift them two or three times towards the head, saying, *Haou; tsing, tsing*; that is, "Are you well? hail! hail!"

<sup>2</sup> In a Chinese novel, translated by Mr. Davis, called *Hung-how Mung*, or "The Red Chamber Dreams," is the following description of a Chinese dandy: "His beautiful nose was full and round, like the gall-bladder of a quadruped; and he had a face like the moon in the midst of autumn; from his head to the end of his tail, which dangled to the ankles, hung four strings of precious stones set in gold. His upper tunic was pink, spangled with flowers, his trousers and stockings were embroidered, and his shoes were of a deep red color, with thick white soles; ten thousand thoughts of love were collected in the corner of his eye."

ment. After one of them had for some time entertained us with her voice, the colonel and she retired for some minutes together. I thought they would never have come back. I must own he is a most agreeable creature. Upon his return they again renewed the concert, and he continued to gaze upon the wall as usual, when, in less than half an hour more, ho! but he retired out of the room with another. He is indeed a most agreeable creature.

"When he came to take his leave the whole ceremony began afresh; papa would see him to the door, but the colonel swore he would rather see the earth turned upside down than permit him to stir a single step, and papa was at last obliged to comply. As soon as he was got to the door papa went out to see him on horseback; here they continued half an hour bowing and cringing before one would mount or the other go in, but the colonel was at last victorious. He had scarce gone a hundred paces from the house, when papa, running out, hallooed after him, 'A good journey!' upon which the colonel returned, and would see papa into his house before ever he would depart. He was no sooner got home than he sent me a very fine present of duck eggs, painted of twenty different colors. His generosity I own has won me. I have ever since been trying over the eight letters of good-fortune,<sup>1</sup> and have great hopes. All I have to apprehend is that, after he has married me, and that I am carried to his house close shut up in my chair, when he comes to have the first sight of my face, he may shut me up a second time and send me back to papa. However, I shall appear as fine as possible; mamma and I have been to buy the clothes for my wedding. I am to have a new *foong hoàng* in my hair,<sup>2</sup> the beak of which will reach down to my nose; the milliner from

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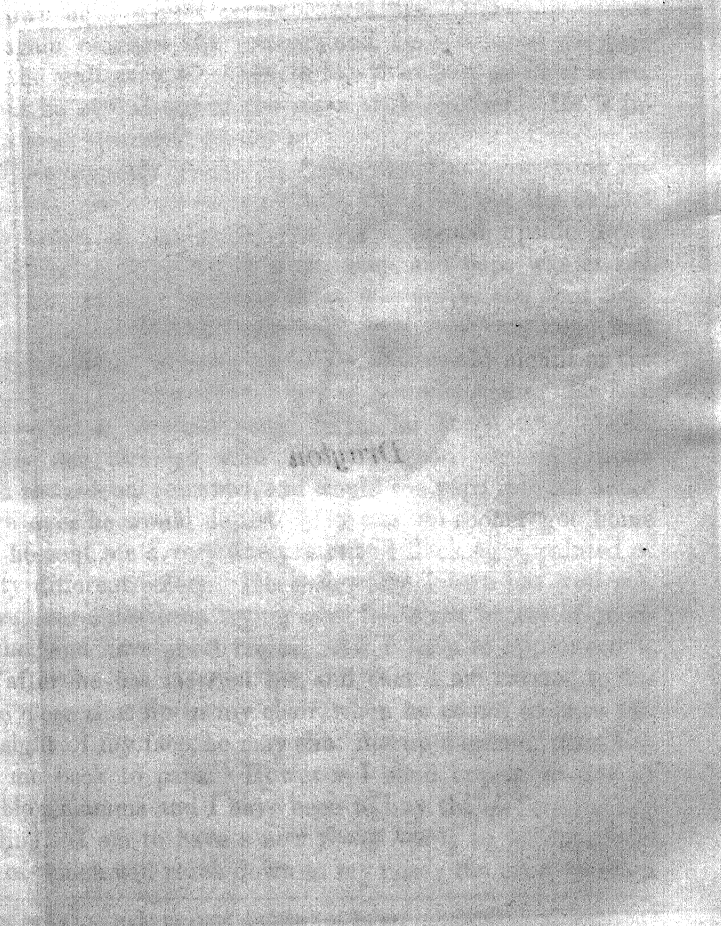
<sup>1</sup> The *pa-kua*, or eight mystical diagrams of Fo-hy.

<sup>2</sup> Unmarried women wear their hair hanging down in long tresses, and the putting up of the hair is one of the ceremonies preparatory to marriage. It is twisted up towards the back of the head, ornamented with flowers or jewels, and fastened with two bodkins stuck in crosswise. They sometimes wear an ornament representing the *foong hoàng*, or Chinese phoenix, composed of gold and jewels, the wings hovering, and the beak of the bird hanging over the forehead on an elastic spring."—DAVIS'S *Chinese*, vol. i. p. 358.



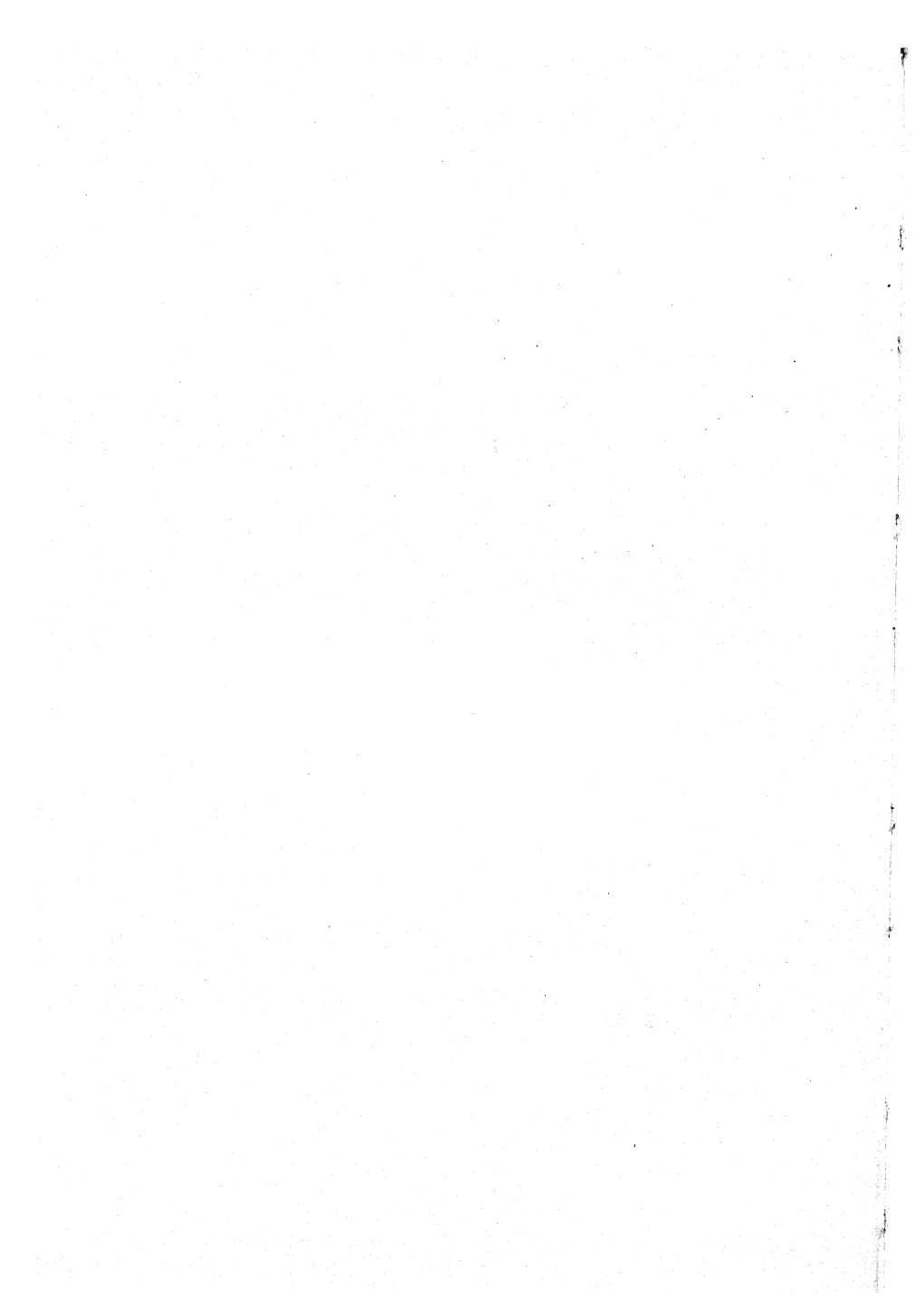
*Drayton*

# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Shakespeare





whom we bought that and our ribbons cheated us as if she had no conscience, and so to quiet mine I cheated her. All this is fair, you know.—I remain, my dear Yaya, your ever faithful  
YAOUA."

## LETTER XL.

THE ENGLISH STILL HAVE POETS, THOUGH NOT VERSIFIERS.

*From the Same.*

You have always testified the highest esteem for the English poets, and thought them not inferior to the Greeks, Romans, or even the Chinese in the art. But it is now thought even by the English themselves that the race of their poets is extinct; every day produces some pathetic exclamation upon the decadence of taste and genius. Pegasus, say they, has slipped the bridle from his mouth, and our modern bards attempt to direct his flight by catching him by the tail.

Yet, my friend, it is only among the ignorant that such discourses prevail; men of true discernment can see several poets still among the English, some of whom equal if not surpass their predecessors. The ignorant term that alone poetry which is couched in a certain number of syllables in every line, where a vapid thought is drawn out into a number of verses of equal length, and perhaps pointed with rhymes at the end. But glowing sentiment, striking imagery, concise expression, natural description, and modulated periods, are fully sufficient entirely to fill up my idea of this art, and make way to every passion.

If my idea of poetry, therefore, be just, the English are not at present so destitute of poetical merit as they seem to imagine. I can see several poets in disguise among them; men furnished with that strength of soul, sublimity of sentiment, and grandeur of expression, which constitutes the character. Many of the writers of their modern odes, sonnets, tragedies, or rebuses, it is true, deserve not the name, though they have

done nothing but clink rhymes and measure syllables for years together; their Johnsons and Smolletts are truly poets; though for aught I know they never made a single verse in their whole lives.

In every incipient language the poet and the prose writer are very distinct in their qualifications; the poet ever proceeds first—treading unbeaten paths, enriching his native funds, and employed in new adventures. The other follows with more cautious steps, and though slow in his motions, treasures up every useful or pleasing discovery. But when once all the extent and the force of the language is known, the poet then seems to rest from his labor, and is at length overtaken by his assiduous pursuer. Both characters are then blended into one; the historian and orator catch all the poet's fire, and leave him no real mark of distinction, except the iteration of numbers regularly returning. Thus, in the decline of ancient European learning, Seneca, though he wrote in prose, is as much a poet as Lucan, and Longinus, though but a critic, more sublime than Apollonius.

From this, then, it appears that poetry is not discontinued, but altered among the English at present; the outward form seems different from what it was, but poetry still continues internally the same: the only question remains, whether the metric feet used by the good writers of the last age, or the prosaic numbers employed by the good writers of this, be preferable? And here the practice of the last age appears to me superior: they submitted to the restraint of numbers and similar sounds; and this restraint, instead of diminishing, augmented the force of their sentiment and style. Fancy restrained may be compared to a fountain which plays highest by diminishing the aperture. Of the truth of this maxim in every language, every fine writer is perfectly sensible from his own experience, and yet to explain the reason would be perhaps as difficult as to make a frigid genius profit by the discovery.

There is still another reason in favor of the practice of the last age, to be drawn from the variety of modulation. The musical period in prose is confined to a very few changes; the

numbers in verse are capable of infinite variation. I speak not now from the practice of modern verse-writers, few of whom have any idea of musical variety, but run on in the same monotonous flow through the whole poem, but rather from the example of their former poets, who were tolerable masters of this variety, and also from a capacity in the language of still admitting various unanticipated music.

Several rules have been drawn up for varying the poetic measure, and critics have elaborately talked of accents and syllables; but good-sense, and a fine ear which rules can never teach, are what alone can in such a case determine. The rapturous flowings of joy, or the interruptions of indignation, require accents placed entirely different, and a structure consonant to the emotions they would express. Changing passions, and numbers changing with those passions, make the whole secret of Western as well as Eastern poetry. In a word, the great faults of the modern professed English poets are, that they seem to want numbers which should vary with the passion, and are more employed in describing to the imagination than striking at the heart. Adieu.

## LETTER XLI.

THE BEHAVIOR OF THE CONGREGATION IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AT PRAYERS.

*To the Same.*

SOME time since I sent thee, O holy disciple of Confucius, an account of the grand abbey or mausoleum of the kings and heroes of this nation. I have since been introduced to a temple not so ancient, but far superior in beauty and magnificence. In this, which is the most considerable of the empire, there are no pompous inscriptions, no flattery paid the dead, but all is elegant and awfully simple. There are, however, a few rags hung round the walls, which have, at a vast expense, been taken from the enemy in the present war. The silk of

which they are composed, when new, might be valued at half a string of copper money in China; yet this wise people fitted out a fleet and an army in order to seize them; though now grown old, and scarcely capable of being patched up into a handkerchief. By this conquest the English are said to have gained, and the French to have lost, much honor. Is the honor of European nations placed only in tattered silk?

In this temple I was permitted to remain during the whole service; and were you not already acquainted with the religion of the English, you might, from my description, be inclined to believe them as grossly idolatrous as the disciples of Lao. The idol which they seem to address strides like a colossus over the door of the inner temple, which here, as with the Jews, is esteemed the most sacred part of the building. Its oracles are delivered in a hundred various tones, which seem to inspire the worshippers with enthusiasm and awe: an old woman, who appeared to be the priestess, was employed in various attitudes, as she felt the inspiration. When it began to speak all the people remained fixed in silent attention, nodding assent, looking approbation, appearing highly edified by those sounds which, to a stranger, might seem inarticulate and unmeaning.

When the idol had done speaking, and the priestess had locked up its lungs with a key, observing almost all the company leaving the temple, I concluded the service was over, and taking my hat, was going to walk away with the crowd, when I was stopped by the man in black, who assured me that the ceremony had scarcely yet begun. "What!" cried I, "do I not see almost the whole body of the worshippers leaving the church? Would you persuade me that such numbers who profess religion and morality would, in this shameless manner, quit the temple before the service was concluded? You surely mistake: not even the Kalmouks would be guilty of such an indecency, though all the object of their worship was but a joint-stool." My friend seemed to blush for his countrymen, assuring me that those whom I saw running away were only a parcel of musical blockheads, whose passion was merely for sounds, and whose heads were as empty as a



fiddle-case. "Those who remain behind," says he, "are the true religious; they make use of music to warm their hearts, and to lift them to a proper pitch of rapture: examine their behavior, and you will confess there are some among us who practise true devotion."

I now looked round me as he directed, but saw nothing of that fervent devotion which he had promised: one of the worshippers appeared to be ogling the company through a glass; another was fervent, not in addresses to Heaven, but to his mistress; a third whispered, a fourth took snuff, and the priest himself, in a drowsy tone, read over the *duties* of the day.

"Bless my eyes!" cried I, as I happened to look toward the door, "what do I see? one of the worshippers fallen fast asleep, and actually sunk down on this cushion! He is now enjoying the benefit of a trance; or does he receive the influence of some mysterious vision?" "Alas! alas!" replied my companion, "no such thing; he has only had the misfortune of eating too hearty a dinner, and finds it impossible to keep his eyes open." Turning to another part of the temple, I perceived a young lady just in the same circumstances and attitude. "Strange," cried I; "can she too have overeaten herself?" "Oh, fie!" replied my friend, "you now grow censorious. She grows drowsy from eating too much! that would be profanation. She only sleeps now from having sat up all night at a brag party." "Turn me where I will, then," says I, "I can perceive no single symptom of devotion among the worshippers, except from that old woman in the corner, who sits groaning behind the long sticks of a mourning fan; she indeed seems greatly edified with what she hears." "Ay," replied my friend, "I knew we should find some to catch you; I know her; that is the deaf lady who lives in the cloisters."

In short, the remissness of behavior in almost all the worshippers, and some even of the guardians, struck me with surprise; I had been taught to believe that none were ever promoted to offices in the temple but men remarkable for their superior sanctity, learning, and rectitude; that there was no such thing heard of as persons being introduced into

the church merely to oblige a senator, or provide for the younger branch of a noble family; I expected, as their minds were continually set upon heavenly things, to see their eyes directed there also, and hoped from their behavior to perceive their inclinations corresponding with their duty. But I am since informed that some are appointed to preside over temples they never visit; and, while they receive all the money, are contented with letting others do all the good. Adieu.

## LETTER XLII.

THE HISTORY OF CHINA MORE REPLETE WITH GREAT ACTIONS  
THAN THAT OF EUROPE.

*From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi, the discontented Wanderer, by the way  
of Moscow.*

MUST I ever continue to condemn thy perseverance, and blame that curiosity which destroys thy happiness? What yet untasted banquet, what luxury yet unknown, has rewarded thy painful adventures? Name a pleasure which thy native country could not amply procure; frame a wish that might not have been satisfied in China. Why then such toil, and such danger, in pursuit of raptures within your reach at home?

The Europeans, you will say, excel us in sciences and in arts—those sciences which bound the aspiring wish, and those arts which tend to gratify even unrestrained desire. They may, perhaps, outdo us in the arts of building ships, casting cannons, or measuring mountains; but are they superior in the greatest of all arts, the art of governing kingdoms and ourselves?

When I compare the history of China with that of Europe, how do I exult in being a native of that kingdom which derives its original from the sun! Upon opening the Chinese history, I there behold an ancient extended empire, established by laws which nature and reason seem to have dictated.

The duty of children to their parents, a duty which nature implants in every breast, forms the strength of that government which has subsisted for time immemorial.<sup>1</sup> Filial obedience is the first and greatest requisite of a state; by this we become good subjects to our emperors, capable of behaving with just subordination to our superiors, and grateful dependants on heaven; by this we become fonder of marriage, in order to be capable of exacting obedience from others in our turn; by this we become good magistrates, for early submission is the truest lesson to those who would learn to rule. By this the whole state may be said to resemble one family, of which the emperor is the protector, father, and friend.

In this happy region, sequestered from the rest of mankind, I see a succession of princes who in general considered themselves as the fathers of their people; a race of philosophers who bravely combated idolatry, prejudice, and tyranny, at the expense of their private happiness and immediate reputation. Whenever a usurper or a tyrant intruded into the administration, how have all the good and great been united against him! Can European history produce an instance like that of the twelve mandarins, who all resolved to apprise the vicious emperor Tisiang of the irregularity of his conduct? He who first undertook the dangerous task was cut in two by the emperor's order; the second was ordered to be tormented, and then put to a cruel death; the third undertook the task with intrepidity, and was instantly stabbed by the tyrant's hand; in this manner they all suffered, except one. But, not to be turned from his purpose, the brave survivor entering the palace with the instruments of torture in his hand, "Here," cried he, addressing himself to the throne, "here, O Tisiang,

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<sup>1</sup> "The vital and universally operating principle of the Chinese government is the duty of submission to parental authority, whether vested in the parents themselves or in their representatives, and which, although usually described under the pleasing appellation of filial piety, is much more properly to be considered as a general rule of action than as the expression of any particular sentiment of affection. It is inculcated with the greatest force in the writings of the first of their philosophers and legislators; it has survived each successive dynasty; and it continues to this day powerfully enforced both by positive laws and by public opinion."—SIR GEORGE STAUNTON.

are the marks your faithful subjects receive for their loyalty, I am wearied with serving a tyrant, and now come for my reward." The emperor, struck with his intrepidity, instantly forgave the boldness of his conduct, and reformed his own. What European annals can boast of a tyrant thus reclaimed to lenity?

When five brethren had set upon the great emperor Ginsong alone, with his sabre he slew four of them; he was struggling with the fifth, when his guards, coming up, were going to cut the conspirator into a thousand pieces. "No, no," cried the emperor, with a calm and placid countenance, "of all his brothers he is the only one remaining; at least let one of the family be suffered to live, that his aged parents may have somebody left to feed and comfort them."<sup>1</sup>

When Haitong, the last emperor of the house of Ming, saw himself besieged in his own city by the usurper, he was resolved to issue from his palace with six hundred of his guards and give the enemy battle; but they forsook him. Being thus without hopes, and choosing death rather than to fall alive into the hands of a rebel, he retired to his garden, conducting his little daughter, an only child, in his hand; there in a private arbor, unsheathing his sword, he stabbed the young innocent to the heart, and then despatched himself, leaving the following words written with his blood on the border of his vest: "Forsaken by my subjects, abandoned by my friends, use my body as you will, but spare, oh, spare my people!"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Du Halde, tom. i. p. 424.

<sup>2</sup> "On the summit of the highest eminences were lofty trees surrounding summer-houses, and cabinets contrived for retreat and pleasure. One of these was pointed out as the last striking scene of the existence of that race of emperors who had built and beautified the whole of this magnificent palace. A man, whom fortune seemed for a while to favor, as if destined to become the head of a new dynasty in China, availed himself, toward the middle of the last century, of the weakness and luxury of the court, and of that indolence which, more than even luxury, had brought the former dynasties to ruin; with an army of Chinese, first collected under the hope of bringing about better times, and kept together afterwards by the tempting bait of plunder, he marched to the gates of Peking. The ill-fated monarch, too slightly supported, and possessed of too little energy to resist, but with sentiments too elevated to brook submission to an enemy who had been

An empire which has thus continued invariably the same for such a long succession of ages ; which, though at last conquered by the Tartars, still preserves its ancient laws and learning, and may more properly be said to annex the dominions of Tartary to its empire than to admit a foreign conqueror ; an empire as large as Europe, governed by one law, acknowledging subjection to one prince, and experiencing but one revolution of any continuance in the space of four thousand years—this is something so peculiarly great, that I am naturally led to despise all other nations on the comparison. Here we see no religious persecutions, no enmity between mankind for difference in opinion. The disciples of Lao-keun, the idolatrous sectaries of Fohi, and the philosophical children of Confucius, only strive to show by their actions the truth of their doctrines.

Now turn from this happy, peaceful scene to Europe, the theatre of intrigue, avarice, and ambition. How many revolutions does it not experience in the compass even of one age ! and to what do these revolutions tend but the destruction of thousands ? Every great event is replete with some new calamity. The seasons of serenity are passed over in silence, their histories seem to speak only of the storm.

There we see the Romans extending their power over barbarous nations, and in turn becoming a prey to those whom they had conquered. We see those barbarians, when become Christians, engaged in continual war with the followers of Mahomet ; or more dreadful still, destroying each other. We see councils in the earlier ages authorizing every iniquity ; crusades spreading desolation in the country left as well as that to be conquered ; excommunications freeing subjects from natural allegiance, and persuading to sedition ; blood flowing in the fields and on scaffolds ; tortures used as arguments to convince the recusant ; to heighten the horror of the

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his subject, and determining to save his offspring from the danger of dishonor, stabbed his only daughter, and put an end to his own life with a cord, in one of those edifices above-mentioned, which had been erected for far other purposes.”—*MACARTNEY, Embassy*, vol. ii. p. 121.

piece, behold it shaded with wars, rebellions, treasons, plots, politics, and poison.

And what advantage has any country of Europe obtained from such calamities? Scarce any. Their dissensions for more than a thousand years have served to make each other unhappy, but have enriched none. All the great nations still nearly preserve their ancient limits; none have been able to subdue the other, and so terminate the dispute. France, in spite of the conquests of Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth, notwithstanding the efforts of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, still remains within its ancient limits. Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, the states of the North, are nearly still the same. What effect, then, has the blood of so many thousands, the destruction of so many cities, produced? Nothing either great or considerable. The Christian princes have lost, indeed, much from the enemies of Christendom, but they have gained nothing from each other. Their princes, because they preferred ambition to justice, deserve the character of enemies to mankind; and their priests, by neglecting morality for opinion, have mistaken the interests of society.

On whatever side we regard the history of Europe we shall perceive it to be a tissue of crimes, follies, and misfortunes; of politics without design, and wars without consequence. In this long list of human infirmity, a great character or a shining virtue may sometimes happen to arise, as we often meet a cottage or a cultivated spot in the most hideous wilderness; but for an Alfred, an Alphonso, a Frederic, or one Alexander the Third, we meet a thousand princes who have disgraced humanity.

## LETTER XLIII.

AN APOSTROPHE ON THE SUPPOSED DEATH OF VOLTAIRE.

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

WE have just received accounts here that Voltaire, the poet and philosopher of Europe, is dead.<sup>1</sup> He is now beyond the reach of the thousand enemies who, while living, degraded his writings and branded his character. Scarce a page of his latter productions that does not betray the agonies of a heart bleeding under the scourge of unmerited reproach. Happy, therefore, at last in escaping from calumny; happy in leaving a world that was unworthy of him and his writings!

Let others, my friend, bestrew the hearses of the great with panegyric; but such a loss as the world has now suffered affects me with stronger emotions. When a philosopher dies, I consider myself as losing a patron, an instructor, and a friend. I consider the world as losing one who might serve to console her amid the desolations of war and ambition. Nature every day produces in abundance men capable of filling all the requisite duties of authority; but she is niggard in the birth of an exalted mind, scarcely producing in a century a single genius to bless and enlighten a degenerate age. Prodigal in the production of kings, governors, mandarins, chams, and courtiers, she seems to have forgotten, for more than three thousand years, the manner in which she once formed the brain of a Confucius; and well it is she has forgotten, when a bad world gave him so very bad a reception.

Whence, my friend, this malevolence which has ever pursued the great even to the tomb? whence this more than

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<sup>1</sup> The account proved untrue. Voltaire died on the 30th May, 1778.

fiend-like disposition of embittering the lives of those who would make us more wise and more happy?

When I cast my eye over the fates of several philosophers, who have at different periods enlightened mankind, I must confess it inspires me with the most degrading reflections on humanity. When I read of the stripes of Mencius, the tortures of Tchín, the bowl of Socrates, and the bath of Seneca; when I hear of the persecutions of Dante, the imprisonment of Galileo, the indignities suffered by Montaigne, the banishment of Cartesius, the infamy of Bacon, and that even Locke himself escaped not without reproach; when I think on such subjects I hesitate whether most to blame the ignorance or the villany of my fellow-creatures.

Should you look for the character of Voltaire among the journalists and illiterate writers of the age, you will there find him characterized as a monster, with a head turned to wisdom, and a heart inclining to vice; the powers of his mind and the baseness of his principles forming a detestable contrast. But seek for his character among writers like himself, and you find him very differently described. You perceive him, in their accounts, possessed of good-nature, humanity, greatness of soul, fortitude, and almost every virtue; in this description those who might be supposed best acquainted with his character are unanimous. The Royal Prussian,<sup>1</sup> D'Argens,<sup>2</sup> Diderot,<sup>3</sup> D'Alembert, and Fontenelle conspire in drawing the picture, in describing the friend of man and the patron of every rising genius.

An inflexible perseverance in what he thought was right, and a generous detestation of flattery, formed the groundwork of this great man's character. From these principles many strong virtues and few faults arose: as he was warm in his friendship, and severe in his resentment, all that mention him seem possessed of the same qualities, and speak of him with rapture or detestation. A person of his eminence can have few indifferent as to his character; every reader must be an enemy or an admirer.

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<sup>1</sup> Philosophe Sans Souci.—GOLDSMITH.

<sup>2</sup> Let. Chin.—GOLDSMITH.

<sup>3</sup> Encycloped.—GOLDSMITH.



This poet began the course of glory so early as the age of eighteen, and even then was author of a tragedy<sup>1</sup> which deserved applause. Possessed of a small patrimony, he preserved his independence in an age of venality, and supported the dignity of learning, by teaching his contemporary writers to live, like him, above the favors of the great. He was banished his native country for a satire upon the royal concubine. He had accepted the place of historian to the French king, but refused to keep it, when he found it was presented only in order that he should be the first flatterer of the state.

The great Prussian received him as an ornament to his kingdom, and had sense enough to value his friendship and profit by his instructions. In this court he continued, till an intrigue, with which the world seems hitherto unacquainted, obliged him to quit that country. His own happiness, the happiness of the monarch, of his sister, of a part of the court, rendered his departure necessary.

Tired at length of courts, and all the follies of the great, he retired to Switzerland, a country of liberty, where he enjoyed tranquillity and the muse. Here, though without any taste for magnificence himself, he usually entertained at his table the learned and polite of Europe, who were attracted by a desire of seeing a person from whom they had received so much satisfaction. The entertainment was conducted with the utmost elegance, and the conversation was that of philosophers. Every country that at once united liberty and science were his peculiar favorites. The being an Englishman was to him a character that claimed admiration and respect.

Between Voltaire and the disciples of Confucius there are many differences; however, being of a different opinion does not in the least diminish my esteem: I am not displeased with my brother because he happens to ask our father for favors in a different manner from me. Let his errors rest in peace, his excellences deserve admiration; let me with the wise admire his wisdom; let the envious and the ignorant ridicule his foibles; the folly of others is ever most ridiculous to those who are themselves most foolish. Adieu.

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<sup>1</sup> "Amulius et Numitor," written before Voltaire had completed his thirteenth year.

## LETTER XLIV.

WISDOM AND PRECEPT MAY LESSEN OUR MISERIES, BUT CAN  
NEVER INCREASE OUR POSITIVE SATISFACTIONS.

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, a Slave in Persia.*

It is impossible to form a philosophic system of happiness which is adapted to every condition in life, since every person who travels in this great pursuit takes a separate road. The differing colors which suit different complexions are not more various than the different pleasures appropriated to particular minds. The various sects who have pretended to give lessons to instruct men in happiness have described their own particular sensations without considering ours, have only loaded their disciples with constraint, without adding to their real felicity.

If I find pleasure in dancing, how ridiculous would it be in me to prescribe such an amusement for the entertainment of a cripple: should he, on the other hand, place his chief delight in painting, yet would he be absurd in recommending the same relish to one who had lost the power of distinguishing colors. General directions are, therefore, commonly useless; and to be particular would exhaust volumes, since each individual may require a particular system of precepts to direct his choice.

Every mind seems capable of entertaining a certain quantity of happiness, which no institutions can increase, no circumstances alter, and entirely independent of fortune. Let any man compare his present fortune with the past, and he will probably find himself, upon the whole, neither better nor worse than formerly.

Gratified ambition, or irreparable calamity, may produce transient sensations of pleasure or distress. Those storms may discompose in proportion as they are strong, or the mind

is pliant to their impression. But the soul, though at first lifted up by the event, is every day operated upon with diminished influence, and at length subsides into the level of its usual tranquillity. Should some unexpected turn of fortune take thee from fetters and place thee on a throne, exultation would be natural upon the change; but the temper, like the face, would soon resume its native serenity.

Every wish, therefore, which leads us to expect happiness somewhere else but where we are; every institution which teaches us that we should be better by being possessed of something new, which promises to lift us a step higher than we are, only lays a foundation for uneasiness, because it contracts debts which it cannot repay; it calls that a good which, when we have found it, will, in fact, add nothing to our happiness.

To enjoy the present, without regret for the past or solicitude for the future, has been the advice rather of poets than philosophers. And yet the precept seems more rational than is generally imagined. It is the only general precept respecting the pursuit of happiness that can be applied with propriety to every condition of life. The man of pleasure, the man of business, and the philosopher are equally interested in its disquisition. If we do not find happiness in the present moment, in what shall we find it? either in reflecting on the past, or prognosticating the future. But let us see how these are capable of producing satisfaction.

A remembrance of what is past, and an anticipation of what is to come seem to be the two faculties by which man differs most from other animals. Though brutes enjoy them in a limited degree, yet their whole life seems taken up in the present, regardless of the past and the future. Man, on the contrary, endeavors to derive his happiness, and experiences most of his miseries, from these two sources.

Is this superiority of reflection a prerogative of which we should boast, and for which we should thank nature; or is it a misfortune of which we should complain and be humble? Either from the abuse, or from the nature of things, it certainly makes our condition more miserable.

Had we a privilege of calling up, by the power of memory, only such passages as were pleasing, unmixed with such as were disagreeable, we might then excite at pleasure an ideal happiness, perhaps more poignant than actual sensation. But this is not the case: the past is never represented without some disagreeable circumstance which tarnishes all its beauty; the remembrance of an evil carries in it nothing agreeable, and to remember a good is always accompanied with regret. Thus we lose more than we gain by remembrance.

And we shall find our expectation of the future to be a gift more distressful even than the former. To fear an approaching evil is certainly a most disagreeable sensation; and in expecting an approaching good, we experience the inquietude of wanting actual possession.

Thus, whichever way we look, the prospect is disagreeable. Behind, we have left pleasures we shall never more enjoy, and therefore regret; and before, we see pleasures which we languish to possess, and are consequently uneasy till we possess them. Was there any method of seizing the present unembittered by such reflections, then would our state be tolerably easy.

This, indeed, is the endeavor of all mankind, who, untutored by philosophy, pursue as much as they can a life of amusement and dissipation. Every rank in life, and every size of understanding, seems to follow this alone; or, not pursuing it, deviates from happiness. The man of pleasure pursues dissipation by profession: the man of business pursues it not less, as every voluntary labor he undergoes is only dissipation in disguise. The philosopher himself, even while he reasons upon the subject, does it unknowingly, with a view of dissipating the thoughts of what he was, or what he must be.

The subject therefore comes to this: Which is the most perfect sort of dissipation—pleasure, business, or philosophy? which best serves to exclude those uneasy sensations which memory or anticipation produce?

The enthusiasm of pleasure charms only by intervals: the highest rapture lasts only for a moment; and all the senses seem so combined as to be soon tired into languor by the

gratification of any one of them. It is only among the poets we hear of men changing to one delight when satiated with another. In nature it is very different; the glutton, when sated with the full meal, is unqualified to feel the real pleasure of drinking; the drunkard in turn finds few of those transports which lovers boast in enjoyment; and the lover, when cloyed, finds a diminution of every other appetite. Thus, after a full indulgence of any one sense, the man of pleasure finds a languor in all, is placed in a chasm between past and expected enjoyment, perceives an interval which must be filled up. The present can give no satisfaction, because he has already robbed it of every charm. A mind thus left without immediate employment naturally recurs to the past or future; the reflector finds that he was happy, and knows that he cannot be so now; he sees that he may yet be happy, and wishes the hour was come: thus every period of his continuance is miserable, except that very short one of immediate gratification. Instead of a life of dissipation, none has more frequent conversations with disagreeable *self* than he: his enthusiasms are but few and transient; his appetites, like angry creditors, continually making fruitless demands for what he is unable to pay, and the greater his former pleasure, the more impatient his expectations. A life of pleasure is therefore the most unpleasing life in the world.

Habit has rendered the man of business more cool in his desires; he finds less regret for past pleasures, and less solicitude for those to come. The life he now leads, though tainted in some measure with hope, is yet not afflicted so strongly with regret, and is less divided between short-lived rapture and lasting anguish. The pleasures he has enjoyed are not so vivid, and those he has to expect cannot consequently create so much anxiety.

The philosopher, who extends his regard to all mankind, must have a still smaller concern for what has already affected or may hereafter affect himself: the concerns of others make his whole study, and that study is his pleasure; and this pleasure is continuing in its nature, because it can be changed at will, leaving but few of these anxious intervals which are

employed in remembrance or anticipation. The philosopher by this means leads a life of almost continued dissipation; and reflection, which makes the uneasiness and misery of others, serves as a companion and instructor to him.

In a word, positive happiness is constitutional, and incapable of increase; misery is artificial, and generally proceeds from our folly. Philosophy can add to our happiness in no other manner but by diminishing our misery: it should not pretend to increase our present stock, but make us economists of what we are possessed of. The great source of calamity lies in regret or anticipation: he, therefore, is most wise who thinks of the present alone, regardless of the past or the future. This is impossible to the man of pleasure; it is difficult to the man of business; and is in some measure attainable by the philosopher. Happy were we all born philosophers; all born with a talent of thus dissipating our own cares, by spreading them upon all mankind! Adieu.

## LETTER XLV.

THE ARDOR OF THE PEOPLE OF LONDON IN RUNNING AFTER  
SIGHTS AND MONSTERS.

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial  
Academy at Pekin, in China.*

THOUGH the frequent invitations I receive from men of distinction here might excite the vanity of some, I am quite mortified, however, when I consider the motives that inspire their civility. I am sent for, not to be treated as a friend, but to satisfy curiosity; not to be entertained, so much as wondered at; the same earnestness which excites them to see a Chinese would have made them equally proud of a visit from the rhinoceros.

From the highest to the lowest this people seem fond of sights and monsters. I am told of a person here who gets a very comfortable livelihood by making wonders and then selling or showing them to the people for money: no matter how

insignificant they were in the beginning, by locking them up close, and showing for money, they soon become prodigies. His first essay in this way was to exhibit himself as a wax-work figure behind a glass door at a puppet-show. Thus, keeping the spectators at a proper distance, and having his head adorned with a copper crown, he looked "extremely natural, and very like the life itself." He continued this exhibition with success, till an involuntary fit of sneezing brought him to life before all the spectators, and consequently rendered him for that time as entirely useless as the peaceable inhabitant of a catacomb.

Determined to act the statue no more, he next levied contributions under the figure of an Indian king; and by painting his face and counterfeiting the savage howl, he frightened several ladies and children with amazing success. In this manner, therefore, he might have lived very comfortably, had he not been arrested for a debt that was contracted when he was the figure in wax-work: thus his face underwent an involuntary ablution, and he found himself reduced to his primitive complexion and indigence.

After some time, being freed from jail, he was now grown wiser, and instead of making himself a wonder was resolved only to make wonders. He learned the art of pasting up mummies, was never at a loss for an artificial *lusus naturæ*; nay, it has been reported that he has sold seven petrified lobsters of his own manufacture to a noted collector of rarities; but this the learned Cracovius Putridus has undertaken to refute in a very elaborate dissertation.

His last wonder was nothing more than a halter; yet by this halter he gained more than by all his former exhibitions. The people, it seems, had got it into their heads that a certain noble criminal<sup>1</sup> was to be hanged with a silken rope. Now, there was nothing they so much desired to see as this very rope, and he was resolved to gratify their curiosity: he there-

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Ferrers: see Letter XXXVIII., p. 225. He was hanged in the dress he wore at his wedding. "The executioners fought for the rope with which he was hanged, and the one who lost it cried."—HORACE WALPOLE to Sir Horace Mann, vol. iii. p. 360.

fore got one made, not only of silk, but, to render it the more striking, several threads of gold were intermixed. The people paid their money only to see silk, but were highly satisfied when they found it was mixed with gold into the bargain. It is scarce necessary to mention that the projector sold his silken rope for almost what it had cost him, as soon as the criminal was known to be hanged in hempen materials.

By their fondness of sights one would be apt to imagine that, instead of desiring to see things as they should be, they are rather solicitous of seeing them as they ought not to be. A cat with four legs is disregarded, though never so useful; but if it has but two, and is consequently incapable of catching mice, it is reckoned inestimable, and every man of taste is ready to raise the auction. A man, though in his person faultless as an aerial genius, might starve; but if stuck over with hideous warts like a porcupine, his fortune is made forever, and he may propagate the breed with impunity and applause.

A good woman in my neighborhood who was bred a habit-maker, though she handled her needle tolerably well, could scarcely get employment. But being obliged by an accident to have both her hands cut off from the elbows, what would in another country have been her ruin made her fortune here: she now was thought more fit for her trade than before; business flowed in apace, and all people paid for seeing the mantua-maker who wrought without hands.

A gentleman, showing me his collection of pictures, stopped at one with peculiar admiration. "There," cries he, "is an inestimable piece." I gazed at the picture for some time, but could see none of those graces with which he seemed enraptured: it appeared to me the most paltry piece of the whole collection. I therefore demanded where those beauties lay of which I was yet insensible. "Sir," cries he, "the merit does not consist in the piece, but in the manner in which it was done. The painter drew the whole with his foot, and held the pencil between his toes. I bought it at a very great price; for peculiar merit should ever be rewarded."

But these people are not more fond of wonders than liberal



in rewarding those who show them. From the wonderful dog of knowledge, at present under the patronage of the nobility, down to the man with the box, who professes to show "the most imitation of nature that was ever seen," they all live in luxury. A singing-woman shall collect subscriptions in her own coach-and-six; a fellow shall make a fortune by tossing a straw from his toe to his nose; one in particular has found that eating fire was the most ready way to live; and another who jingles several bells fixed to his cap is the only man that I know of who has received emolument from the labors of his head.

A young author, a man of good-nature and learning, was complaining to me some nights ago of this misplaced generosity of the times. "Here," says he, "have I spent part of my youth in attempting to instruct and amuse my fellow-creatures, and all my reward has been solitude, poverty and reproach; while a fellow, possessed of even the smallest share of fiddling merit, or who has perhaps learned to whistle double, is rewarded, applauded, and caressed!" "Prithee, young man," says I to him, "are you ignorant that in so large a city as this it is better to be an amusing than a useful member of society? Can you leap up and touch your feet four times before you come to the ground?" "No, sir." "Can you pimp for a man of quality?" "No, sir." "Can you stand upon two horses at full speed?" "No, sir." "Can you swallow a penknife?" "I can do none of these tricks." "Why, then," cried I, "there is no other prudent means of subsistence left but to apprise the town that you speedily intend to eat up your own nose, by subscription."

I have frequently regretted that none of our Eastern posture-masters or showmen have ever ventured to England. I should be pleased to see that money circulate in Asia which is now sent to Italy and France, in order to bring their vagabonds hither. Several of our tricks would undoubtedly give the English high satisfaction. Men of fashion would be greatly pleased with the postures as well as the condescension of our dancing-girls, and the ladies would equally admire the conductors of our fireworks. What an agreeable

surprise would it be to see a huge fellow with whiskers flash a charged blunderbuss full in a lady's face without singeing her hair or melting her pomatum! Perhaps, when the first surprise was over, she might then grow familiar with danger; and the ladies might vie with each other in standing fire with intrepidity.

But of all the wonders of the East the most useful, and I should fancy the most pleasing, would be the looking-glass of Lao, which reflects the mind as well as the body. It is said that the Emperor Chusi used to make his concubines dress their heads and their hearts in one of these glasses every morning: while the lady was at her toilet he would frequently look over her shoulder; and it is recorded that, among the three hundred which composed his seraglio, not one was found whose mind was not even more beautiful than her person.

I make no doubt but a glass in this country would have the very same effect. The English ladies, concubines and all, would undoubtedly cut very pretty figures in so faithful a monitor. There, should we happen to peep over a lady's shoulder while dressing, we might be able to see neither gaming nor ill-nature; neither pride, debauchery, nor a love of gadding. We should find her, if any sensible defect appeared in the mind, more careful in rectifying it than plastering up the irreparable decays of the person; nay, I am even apt to fancy that ladies would find more real pleasure in this utensil in private than in any other bauble imported from China, though never so expensive or amusing.

## LETTER XLVI.

### THE LOOKING-GLASS OF LAO—A DREAM.

*To the Same.*

UPON finishing my last letter I retired to rest, reflecting upon the wonders of the glass of Lao, wishing to be possessed of one here, and resolved in such case to oblige every lady with a sight of it for nothing. What fortune denied me

waking fancy supplied in a dream: the glass, I know not how, was put into my possession, and I could perceive several ladies approaching, some voluntarily, others driven forward against their wills, by a set of discontented genii, who by intuition I knew were their husbands.

The apartment in which I was to show away was filled with several gaming tables, as if just forsaken; the candles were burnt to the socket, and the hour was five o'clock in the morning. Placed at one end of the room, which was of prodigious length, I could more easily distinguish every female figure as she marched up from the door; but guess my surprise, when I could scarce perceive one blooming or agreeable face among the number! This, however, I attributed to the early hour, and kindly considered that the face of a lady just risen from bed ought always to find a compassionate advocate.

The first person who came up in order to view her intellectual face was a commoner's wife, who, as I afterwards found, being bred during her virginity in a pawnbroker's shop, now attempted to make up the defects of breeding and sentiment by the magnificence of her dress, and the expensiveness of her amusements. "Mr. Showman," cried she, approaching, "I am told you has something to show in that there sort of magic lanthorn, by which folks can see themselves on the inside: I protest, as my Lord Beetle says, I am sure it will be vastly pretty, for I have never seen anything like it before. But how: are we to strip off our clothes and be turned inside out? if so, as Lord Beetle says, I absolutely declare off; for I would not strip for the world before a man's face, and so I tells his lordship almost every night of his life." I informed the lady that I would dispense with the ceremony of stripping, and immediately presented my glass to her view.

As when a first-rate beauty, after having with difficulty escaped the small-pox, revisits her favorite mirror—that mirror which had repeated the flattery of every lover, and even added force to the compliment—expecting to see what had so often given her pleasure, she no longer beholds the cherried lip, the polished forehead, and speaking blush, but a hateful phiz quilted into a thousand seams by the hand of deformity,

grief, resentment, and rage fill her bosom by turns; she blames the fates and the stars, but most of all the unhappy glass feels her resentment: so it was with the lady in question; she had never seen her own mind before, and was now shocked at its deformity. One single look was sufficient to satisfy her curiosity: I held up the glass to her face, and she shut her eyes; no entreaties could prevail upon her to gaze once more. She was even going to snatch it from my hands and break it in a thousand pieces. I found it was time, therefore, to dismiss her as incorrigible, and show away to the next that offered.

This was an unmarried lady, who continued in a state of virginity till thirty-six, and then admitted a lover when she despaired of a husband. No woman was louder at a revel than she, perfectly free-hearted, and almost in every respect a man; she understood ridicule to perfection, and was once known even to sally out in order to beat the watch. "Here, you, my dear, with the outlandish face," said she, addressing me, "let me take a single peep. Not that I care three damns what figure I may cut in the glass of such an old-fashioned creature; if I am allowed the beauties of the face by people of fashion, I know the world will be complaisant enough to toss me the beauties of the mind into the bargain." I held my glass before her as she desired, and must confess was shocked with the reflection. The lady, however, gazed for some time with the utmost complacency; and at last, turning to me with the most satisfied smile, said she never could think she had been half so handsome.

Upon her dismissal a lady of distinction was reluctantly hauled along to the glass by her husband. In bringing her forward, as he came first to the glass himself, his mind appeared tinctured with immoderate jealousy, and I was going to reproach him for using her with such severity; but when the lady came to present herself I immediately retracted; for, alas! it was seen that he had but too much reason for his suspicions.

The next was a lady who usually teased all her acquaintance in desiring to be told of her faults, and then never mended

any. Upon approaching the glass I could readily perceive vanity, affectation, and some other ill-looking blots on her mind; wherefore, by my advice, she immediately set about mending. But I could easily find she was not earnest in the work; for as she repaired them on one side, they generally broke out on another. Thus, after three or four attempts, she began to make the ordinary use of the glass in settling her hair.

The company now made room for a woman of learning, who approached with a slow pace and a solemn countenance, which, for her own sake, I could wish had been cleaner. "Sir," cried the lady, flourishing her hand, which held a pinch of snuff, "I shall be enraptured by having presented to my view a mind with which I have so long studied to be acquainted; but, in order to give the sex a proper example, I must insist that all the company may be permitted to look over my shoulder." I bowed assent, and, presenting the glass, showed the lady a mind by no means so fair as she had expected to see. Ill-nature, ill-placed pride, and spleen were too legible to be mistaken. Nothing could be more amusing than the mirth of her female companions who had looked over. They had hated her from the beginning, and now the apartment echoed with a universal laugh. Nothing but a fortitude like hers could have withstood their raillery: she stood it, however; and when the burst was exhausted, with great tranquillity she assured the company that the whole was a *deceptio visus*, and that she was too well acquainted with her own mind to believe any false representations from another. Thus saying, she retired with a sullen satisfaction, resolved not to mend her faults, but to write a criticism on the mental reflector.

I must own by this time I began myself to suspect the fidelity of my mirror; for, as the ladies appeared at least to have the merit of rising early, since they were up at five, I was amazed to find nothing of this good quality pictured upon their minds in the reflection: I was resolved, therefore, to communicate my suspicions to a lady whose intellectual countenance appeared more fair than any of the rest, not having above seventy-nine spots in all, besides slips and foibles. "I

own, young woman," said I, "that there are some virtues upon that mind of yours, but there is still one which I do not see represented—I mean that of rising betimes in the morning. I fancy the glass false in that particular." The young lady smiled at my simplicity; and, with a blush, confessed that she and the whole company had been up all night gaming.

By this time all the ladies, except one, had seen themselves successively, and disliked the show or scolded the showman: I was resolved, however, that she who seemed to neglect herself and was neglected by the rest should take a view; and going up to a corner of the room where she still continued sitting, I presented my glass full in her face. Here it was that I exulted in my success; no blot, no stain appeared on any part of the faithful mirror. As when the large unwritten page presents its snowy spotless bosom to the writer's hand so appeared the glass to my view. "Here, O ye daughters of English ancestors," cried I, "turn hither and behold an object worthy imitation; look upon the mirror now, and acknowledge its justice, and this woman's pre-eminence!" The ladies, obeying the summons, came up in a group, and looking on, acknowledged there was some truth in the picture—as the person now represented had been deaf, dumb, and a fool from her cradle!

Thus much of my dream I distinctly remember; the rest was filled with chimeras, enchanted castles, and flying dragons, as usual. As you, my dear Fum Hoam, are particularly versed in the interpretation of those midnight warnings, what pleasure should I find in your explanation! But that our distance prevents: I make no doubt, however, but that, from my description, you will very much venerate the good qualities of the English ladies in general; since dreams, you know, go always by contraries. Adieu.



## LETTER XLVII.

### MISERY BEST RELIEVED BY DISSIPATION.

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, a Slave in Persia.*<sup>1</sup>

YOUR last letters betray a mind seemingly fond of wisdom, yet tempested up by a thousand various passions. You would fondly persuade me that my former lessons still influence your conduct, and yet your mind seems not less enslaved than your body. Knowledge, wisdom, erudition, arts, and elegance, what are they but the mere trappings of the mind, if they do not serve to increase the happiness of the possessor? A mind rightly instituted in the school of philosophy acquires at once the stability of the oak, and the flexibility of the osier. The truest manner of lessening our agonies is to shrink from their pressure—is to confess that we feel them.

The fortitude of European sages is but a dream; for where lies the merit in being insensible to the strokes of fortune, or in dissembling our sensibility? If we are insensible, that arises only from a happy constitution: that is a blessing previously granted by Heaven, and which no art can procure, no institutions improve.

If we dissemble our feelings, we only artificially endeavor to persuade others that we enjoy privileges which we actually do not possess. Thus, while we endeavor to appear happy, we feel at once all the pangs of internal misery, and all the self-reproaching consciousness of endeavoring to deceive.

I know but of two sects of philosophers in the world that have endeavored to inculcate that fortitude is but an imaginary virtue—I mean the followers of Confucius, and those who profess the doctrines of Christ. All other sects teach pride

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<sup>1</sup> This letter appears to be little more than a rhapsody of sentiments from Confucius. *Vide* the Latin translation.—GOLDSMITH.

under misfortunes; they alone teach humility. "Night" says our Chinese philosopher, "not more surely follows day, than groans and tears grow out of pain; when misfortunes therefore oppress, when tyrants threaten, it is our interest, it is our duty to fly even to dissipation for support, to seek redress from friendship, or from that best of friends who loved us into being."

Philosophers, my son, have long declaimed against the passions, as being the source of all our miseries: they are the source of all our misfortunes, I own; but they are the source of our pleasures, too; and every endeavor of our lives, and all the institutions of philosophy, should tend to this—not to dissemble an absence of passion, but to repel those which lead to vice by those which direct to virtue.

The soul may be compared to a field of battle, where two armies are ready every moment to encounter; not a single vice but has a more powerful opponent, and not one virtue but may be overborne by a combination of vices. Reason guides the hands of either host; nor can it subdue one passion but by the assistance of another. Thus as a bark on every side beset with storms enjoys a state of rest, so does the mind, when influenced by a just equipoise of the passions, enjoy tranquillity.

I have used such means as my little fortune would admit to procure your freedom. I have lately written to the governor of Argun to pay your ransom, though at the expense of all the wealth I brought with me from China. If we become poor, we shall at least have the pleasure of bearing poverty together; for what is fatigue or famine when weighed against friendship and freedom? Adieu.



## LETTER XLVIII.

THE ABSURDITY OF PERSONS IN HIGH STATION PURSUING EMPLOYMENTS BENEATH THEM EXEMPLIFIED IN A FAIRY TALE.

*From Lien Chi Altangi to —, Merchant in Amsterdam.*

HAPPENING some days ago to call at a painter's to amuse myself in examining some pictures (I had no design to buy), it surprised me to see a young prince in the working-room, dressed in a painter's apron, and assiduously learning the trade. We instantly remembered to have seen each other; and, after the usual compliments, I stood by while he continued to paint on. As everything done by the rich is praised; as princes here, as well as in China, are never without followers, three or four persons, who had the appearance of gentlemen, were placed behind to comfort and applaud him at every stroke.

Need I tell that it struck me with very disagreeable sensations to see a youth, who, by his station in life, had it in his power to be useful to thousands, thus letting his mind run to waste upon canvas, at the same time fancying himself improving in taste, and filling his rank with proper decorum?

As seeing an error, and attempting to redress it, are only one and the same with me, I took occasion, upon his lordship's desiring my opinion of a Chinese scroll intended for the frame of a picture, to assure him that a mandarin of China thought a minute acquaintance with such mechanical trifles below his dignity.

This reply raised the indignation of some and the contempt of others. I could hear the names of Vandal, Goth, taste, polite arts, delicacy, and fire repeated in tones of ridicule or resentment. But—considering that it was in vain to argue against people who had so much to say—without contradicting them, I begged leave to repeat a fairy tale. This request re-

doubled their laughter; but, not easily abashed at the raillery of boys, I persisted, observing that it would set the absurdity of placing our affections upon trifles in the strongest point of view, and adding that it was hoped the moral would compensate for its stupidity. "For Heaven's sake," cried the great man, washing his brush in water, "let us have no morality at present; if we must have a story let it be without any moral." I pretended not to hear, and while he handled the brush proceeded as follows:

"In the kingdom of Bonbobbins, which, by the Chinese annals, appears to have flourished twenty thousand years ago, there reigned a prince endowed with every accomplishment which generally distinguishes the sons of kings. His beauty was brighter than the sun. The sun, to which he was nearly related, would sometimes stop his course in order to look down and admire him.

"His mind was not less perfect than his body: he knew all things without having ever read; philosophers, poets, and historians submitted their works to his decision; and so penetrating was he that he could tell the merit of a book by looking on the cover. He made epic poems, tragedies, and pastorals with surprising facility; song, epigram, or rebus was all one to him, though it is observed he could never finish an acrostic. In short, the fairy who presided at his birth had endowed him with almost every perfection, or what was just the same, his subjects were ready to acknowledge he possessed them; and, for his own part, he knew nothing to the contrary. A prince so accomplished received a name suitable to his merit; and he was called Bonbenin-bonbobbins-bonbobbins, which signifies Enlightener of the Sun.

"As he was very powerful, and yet unmarried, all the neighboring kings earnestly sought his alliance. Each sent his daughter dressed out in the most magnificent manner, and with the most sumptuous retinue imaginable, in order to allure the prince; so that at one time there were seen at his court not less than seven hundred foreign princesses of exquisite sentiment and beauty, each alone sufficient to make seven hundred ordinary men happy.

"Distracted in such a variety, the generous Bonbenin, had he not been obliged by the laws of the empire to make choice of one, would very willingly have married them all, for none understood gallantry better. He spent numberless hours of solicitude in endeavoring to determine whom he should choose: one lady was possessed of every perfection, but he disliked her eyebrows; another was brighter than the morning-star, but he disapproved her fong-whang.<sup>1</sup> A third did not lay white enough on her cheek; and a fourth did not sufficiently blacken her nails. At last, after numberless disappointments on the one side and the other, he made choice of the incomparable Nanhoa, queen of the scarlet dragons.

"The preparations for the royal nuptials, or the envy of the disappointed ladies, needs no description; both the one and the other were as great as they could be; the beautiful princess was conducted amid admiring multitudes to the royal couch, where, after being divested of every encumbering ornament, she was placed, in expectance of the youthful bridegroom, who did not keep her long in expectation. He came more cheerful than the morning, and, printing on her lips a burning kiss, the attendants took this as a proper signal to withdraw.

"Perhaps I ought to have mentioned in the beginning that, among several other qualifications, the prince was fond of collecting and breeding mice, which, being a harmless pastime, none of his counsellors thought proper to dissuade him from; he therefore kept a variety of these pretty little animals in the most beautiful cages enriched with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones: thus he innocently spent four hours each day in contemplating their innocent little pastimes.

"But to proceed. The prince and princess were now in bed: one with all the love and expectation, the other with all the modesty and fear which is natural to suppose—both willing, yet afraid to begin; when the prince, happening to look towards the outside of the bed, perceived one of the most

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<sup>1</sup> See page 230.

beautiful animal in the world, a white mouse with green eyes, playing about the floor and performing a hundred pretty tricks. He was already master of blue mice, red mice, and even white mice with yellow eyes; but a white mouse with green eyes was what he had long endeavored to possess: wherefore, leaping from bed with the utmost impatience and agility, the youthful prince attempted to seize the little charmer, but it was fled in a moment; for, alas! the mouse was sent by a discontented princess, and was itself a fairy.

"It is impossible to describe the agony of the prince upon this occasion; he sought round and round every part of the room, even the bed where the princess lay was not exempt from the inquiry: he turned the princess on one side and the other, stripped her quite naked, but no mouse was to be found. The princess herself was kind enough to assist, but still to no purpose.

"'Alas,' cried the young prince, in an agony, 'how unhappy am I to be thus disappointed! never, sure, was so beautiful an animal seen! I would give half my kingdom and my princess to him that would find it.' The princess, though not much pleased with the latter part of his offer, endeavored to comfort him as well as she could; she let him know that he had a hundred mice already, which ought to be at least sufficient to satisfy any philosopher like him. Though none of them had green eyes, yet he should learn to thank Heaven that they had eyes. She told him (for she was a profound moralist) that incurable evils must be borne, and that useless lamentations were vain, and that man was born to misfortunes; she even entreated him to return to bed, and she would endeavor to lull him on her bosom to repose; but still the prince continued inconsolable; and, regarding her with a stern air, for which his family was remarkable, he vowed never to sleep in the royal palace, or indulge himself in the innocent pleasures of matrimony, till he had found the white mouse with the green eyes."

"Prithee, Colonel Leech," cried his lordship, interrupting me, "how do you like that nose? don't you think there is something of the manner of Rembrandt in it? A prince in

all this agony for a white mouse, oh, ridiculous! Don't you think, Major Vampyre, that eyebrow stippled very prettily? But pray what are the green eyes to the purpose, except to amuse children? I would give a thousand guineas to lay on the coloring of this cheek more smoothly. But I ask pardon; pray, sir, proceed."

END OF VOL. III.